

5-2018

Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses

Douglas J. Geilman
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Geilman, Douglas J., "Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses" (2018). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 7052.
<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/7052>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usu.edu.



EXPERIENCES OF INSTRUCTORS USING READY-TO-TEACH,
FIXED-CONTENT ONLINE COURSES

by

Douglas J. Geilman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Education
(Curriculum and Instruction)

Approved:

Courtney Stewart, Ph.D.
Major Professor

Michael Freeman, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Susan Turner, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Sheri Haderlie, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Steven Laing, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Mark R. McLellan, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2018

Copyright © Douglas J. Geilman 2018

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses

by

Douglas J. Geilman, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2018

Major Professor: Courtney D. Stewart, Ph.D.
Department: Teacher Education and Leadership

Online instruction is now the prevalent tool for distance learning. Understanding the adaptable role of the instructor in online distance education is pivotal in the work of comprehending its affordances and limitations. Although there are some commonalities between all forms of online teaching, experiences instructors have vary depending upon the structure of the online course. The ready-to-teach, fixed-content format merited further study because of the degree to which it unbundles or disaggregates traditional instructor responsibilities by removing the work of determining what to teach and how to teach it. This qualitative multiple case study examined the following question: “How does a UUW (Unidentified University of the West) adjunct online instructor describe his or her instructional experiences within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed- content online course?” Through qualitative inquiry, the researcher studied (1) perceptions and opinions adjunct online instructors have about the ready-to-teach course format; (2) in what ways the ready-to-teach course format aligns with or differs from previous teaching

experiences; and (3) what influences the decisions online instructors make about how to fulfill their role in a fixed-content course.

Findings indicate that many factors influenced instructors' positive and negative perceptions of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online format, including recognition of university programmatic needs and personal preferences; the ready-to-teach course format has created an instructional environment that simultaneously connects with and diverges from instructors' previous face-to-face teaching experiences; multiple influences helped adjunct online instructors learn how to fulfill their role in a UUW ready-to-teach, fixed-content course, including UUW-sponsored training and inservice, experiences being an online student, previous or other online teaching experience, and skills gained through continued practice; instructors used nonprescribed aspects of ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses to fulfill their role in individualized ways; and commitment to online education, love of teaching, and fulfillment of personal needs motivated adjunct online instructors to continue in their employment with UUW. This study concluded by providing recommendations for areas of future research related to ready-to-teach online courses, including the impact of instructional unbundling on students.

(146 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses

Douglas J. Geilman

Online instruction is now the prevalent tool for distance learning. Understanding the adaptable role of the instructor in online distance education is pivotal in the work of comprehending its affordances and limitations. Although there are some commonalities between all forms of online teaching, experiences instructors have may vary depending upon the structure of the online course. The ready-to-teach, fixed-content format merited further study because of the degree to which it unbundles or disaggregates traditional instructor responsibilities by removing the work of determining what to teach and how to teach it. This qualitative multiple case study examined the instructional experiences of adjunct online instructors who adapted to a limited teaching role that excluded selecting online course content or developing course design. Study findings revealed that instructor perceptions of ready-to-teach courses varied according to the nature of the subject being taught and personal preferences. Findings also demonstrated that instructors applied previous teaching experiences to the situation when possible but learned new skills that reflected the modified instructional environment as well. Despite varying degrees of contentment or discontentment with the limitations regarding course content, most instructors found the motivation to continue in their employment with their sponsoring institution. This study provided perspectives on the phenomenon of instructional unbundling in higher education, in which roles that traditionally belonged to a single

educator are distributed among many individuals for the purpose of greater efficiency or use of expertise.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Ginger, for her unfailing encouragement, patient support, and continual belief that we could complete this doctoral degree. I love you, Ginger. You are everything to me.

I thank my parents, Keith and Jenell Geilman, for making education a priority through the years I was growing up and for not replacing the television immediately after it broke. Small decisions can have a huge impact.

I gratefully acknowledge my employer, the Seminaries and Institutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for allowing me to pursue educational opportunities that would not have been available otherwise.

Finally, many thanks to the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University. Specifically, I recognize Dr. Courtney D. Stewart, my committee chair, and my committee members, Dr. Michael Freeman, Dr. Susan Turner, Dr. Sheri Haderlie, and Dr. Steven Laing.

Douglas J. Geilman

CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
PUBLIC ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background to the Study	3
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions	6
Delimitations	7
Definition of Terms	8
Role of the Researcher	9
Summary and Organization of Chapters	10
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	11
Knowles and Jarvis.....	11
Brief Historical Overview of Distance Education and Online Learning.....	14
Guiding Principles for Online Instruction	16
Training and Professional Learning	19
Unbundling the Role of the Teacher	21
Literature Review Conclusions	28
III. METHODS.....	29
Qualitative Research Approach: Multiple Case Study.....	29
Research Design	30
Data Collection.....	32
Data Analysis	35
Trustworthiness	37

IV. RESULTS.....	39
Setting.....	40
Findings	47
Presentation of Discussion	49
Chapter Summary.....	88
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	91
Comparison of Findings with Theory and Research	91
Summary of the Discussion.....	103
Limitations and Cautions.....	104
Recommendations for Practice.....	106
Recommendations for Further Research	109
Conclusion.....	112
REFERENCES	114
APPENDICES	126
Appendix A: Letter of Information.....	127
Appendix B: Interview Protocol.....	130
Appendix C: External Audit Letter	133
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	135

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Sources of Data from Study Participants	34
2. Finding 1 Data Frequency Chart: Positive Aspects	51
3. Finding 1 Data Frequency Chart: Negative Aspects.....	52
4. Finding 2 Data Frequency Chart.....	60
5. Finding 3 Data Frequency Chart.....	67
6. Finding 4 Data Frequency Chart.....	74
7. Finding 5 Data Frequency Chart.....	81

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Instructional group organizational chart.....	43
2. Issue reporting process for errors in online courses	44
3. Representation of study findings.....	48
4. Representation of traditional relationship between instructor, course content, and student.....	65
5. Representation of relationship between instructor, student, and course content in a fixed-content course.....	65

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be a teacher? Generally, a teacher is an authority figure whose responsibility is to direct learning in a school setting. For children and teens, teachers are at the core of every school experience. A teacher can be a role model who provides emotional support and security. He or she can also be a source of discouragement, frustration, or resentment (Spilt, Hughes, Wu, & Kwok, 2012).

By the time students reach higher education settings, those who instruct them are often expected to be heavily engaged in research as well as instruction (Prosser, Martin, Trigwell, Ramsden, & Middleton, 2008; Serow, 2000). The tension between these responsibilities can create difficulties for higher education instructors (Parsons & Frick, 2008), but college and university-level teachers generally see teaching as an important part of their work as academics even though the rewards for research are often more readily apparent than are those for excellence in instruction (Geschwind & Broström, 2015).

In all settings, teaching has traditionally been a multifaceted role that allows for a mixture of subject matter expertise, interpersonal relationships, creativity, and personal initiative. It is a task and a vocation that is chosen most frequently because of three primary reasons: love for a subject, love for students, or love for the process of teaching and learning (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Mahlios, 2002). The balance between these three loves is unique to each individual who decides to teach.

The age of the internet has spurred innovation and change in the world of

education. Online instruction is now the prevalent tool for distance learning. Electronic connection between teachers and learners, and learners and learners, creates the possibility for education to extend beyond previous geographic or temporal limitations. According to the 2014 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey, 70.7% of active, degree-granting institutions that are open to the public have online distance education offerings (Allen & Seaman, 2015, p. 9). Furthermore, 70.8% of schools report that online education is critical for their institution's long-term strategy (Allen & Seaman, 2015). While opinions can vary concerning the effectiveness of online education, more than 70% of schools that offer distance courses believe that learning outcomes in online courses are the same as or superior to learning outcomes in face-to-face settings (Allen & Seaman, 2015). These statistics demonstrate clearly that online distance education is part of the current educational landscape and is likely to remain there.

In online instruction, the role of the teacher may change considerably from what it has traditionally been. The availability of ready-to-use, previously-prepared electronic teaching materials that can be reused and repurposed for efficiency and quality control has influenced the typical requirement of teacher-as-subject-matter-expert (Borgemenke, Holt, & Fish, 2013; Piña & Bohn, 2014). Understanding the adaptable role of the teacher in online distance education is pivotal in the work of comprehending its capabilities and limitations.

Background to the Study

Due to varied instructional needs and diverse technological tools, online teaching and learning can happen in many different formats and structures, encompassing a wide variety of teaching environments with varying degrees of teacher autonomy and responsibility. This section will discuss a number of online course structures and will introduce some of the research that has been conducted with regard to them. Because the role of the teacher has evolved in online instruction, particularly with regard to the ready-to-teach course format, the term *instructor* will be used in the place of traditional title of *teacher*.

Although there are some commonalities between all forms of online teaching, instructor experiences vary depending upon the structure of the online course. Three general categories of online learning include web-facilitated courses, in which 1 to 29% of content is delivered online; blended/hybrid courses, in which 30 to 79% of content is delivered online; and online, in which 80% or more of the content is delivered online (Allen & Seaman, 2015, p. 7).

Within the category of online courses, further subdivisions exist with regard to method of content preparation. Some courses are fully designed and administered by a single instructor. Other courses have a design agreed upon by a group of instructors, all of whom use the same course and are stakeholders with ability to give input concerning course content. Finally, ready-to-teach online courses are typically created independently of those who will teach them, often by the sponsoring school or institution as a joint effort between a subject matter expert and an instructional design team (Smith, 2008).

A number of qualitative or mixed-method studies have investigated educators' experiences learning to teach online, all of which describe the process from the perspective of the instructors themselves (Arsht, 2011; Bailey, 2008; Chester, 2012; Chi, 2013; Dirkin, 2008; Faulkner-Beitzel, 2008; Hoffman, 2016; Lari, 2008; Lewis, 2007; McQuiggan, 2011; Pankowski, 2003; Quinn, 2014; Russell, 2011; Scott, 2009; Sellers, 2001; Skibba, 2011). The majority of these studies involve online courses in which the instructor develops and implements the curriculum personally. Quinn's study specifically researches online instructors using ready-to-teach courses provided by the sponsoring educational institution. The ready-to-teach format is significant because it represents two key reasons why many institutions have embraced e-learning: ready-to-teach courses are a way for institutions to manage costs (Neely & Tucker, 2010; Paris, 2013; Twigg, 2003) and to have greater control in the production and distribution of instruction (Johnson, 2013; Rice, 2006; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Smith, 2008).

Although the instructors in Quinn's study received their courses in a ready-to-teach format, they still had the ability to alter course content. One important finding of her research was that faculty were generally favorable to the ready-to-teach form of online instruction provided that instructors could adjust the course to meet their needs (Quinn, 2014, p. 218). However, some online courses are prepared in the ready-to-teach format but the content is fixed. In such courses, instructors do not have the ability to make changes according to personal preference (Davison, 2016). Consequently, further study is needed within the category of ready-to-teach online courses.

Statement of the Problem

The literature contains few scholarly studies that describe the ready-to-teach, fixed-content form of online education. Educational institutions that are considering adopting the ready-to-teach course model or that are attempting to implement a ready-to-teach model need insights into effective or ineffective practice from the efforts of others so as to create an online program that serves the needs of the institution, instructors, and students alike.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain insight into what 10 adjunct online instructors for a private university (given the pseudonym Unidentified University of the West, hereafter abbreviated to UUW) experienced within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. The rising prevalence of online education in its varied forms, combined with the absence of data concerning instructor experiences using ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses, made this a meaningful topic to research.

Through the candid descriptions of instructor experiences this study contained, those who are responsible for hiring and supporting online instructors can better determine personal and professional teacher characteristics that lead to a successful experience in the fixed-content, ready-to-teach online course format. By taking these characteristics into account during the online instructor hiring process, schools and universities can increase the likelihood of instructor success.

School professionals with responsibility for instructional design and online course maintenance can also learn from this study how the consequences of their actions, positive and negative, extend into the ability of adjunct online instructors to successfully perform their responsibilities and ultimately into student learning. The successful execution of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course depends upon the effective collaboration of many individuals.

In addition to schools or universities benefitting from a better understanding of actual online instructor practice, adjunct online instructors may also profit from knowing what their peers have experienced. Instructors of ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses may often be isolated from other teaching peers. By reading the comments of others fulfilling the same role, they may be better able to assess their own personal progress. They may find assurance that current challenges they may be having in the ready-to-teach, fixed-content format can be overcome. Conversely, instructors may also recognize that they would be better suited to a different form of online teaching with different liberties and constraints.

Research Questions

A central question with three subquestions will guide this study to gain perspectives on current lived experiences of instructors using fixed-content, ready-to-teach online courses.

Main Question

How does a UOW adjunct online instructor describe his or her instructional

experiences within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed- content online course?

Subquestions

1. What perceptions and opinions does a U UW adjunct online instructor have about the ready-to-teach, fixed-course course format?
2. How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for U UW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course aligns with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?
3. What influences the decisions a U UW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online teacher?

Delimitations

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) describe delimitations as being parameters that are deliberately placed upon a study so as to limit its scope. Delimitations for this study included a sample size of ten. Furthermore, criteria for inclusion in the study were delimiting factors. First, the online instructors being studied were adjunct (nontenured, parttime) U UW faculty and not full-time. This choice was deliberate due to the fact that the U UW online program is comprised of an adjunct faculty. Second, instructors participating in the study were required to have a face-to-face teaching background to provide meaningful insights about the comparatively new instructional setting of a ready-to-teach online course. Third, to have greater depth of experience upon which to draw, all participants had two or more semesters' experience using the ready-to-teach format. Finally, study participants were located within a 50-mile radius of the researcher to be accessible for interviews. This delimitation did not compromise the diversity of the pool of participants, however, because one third of all U UW adjunct online adjunct instructors

reside within this area.

Definition of Terms

The terms listed below appear in this study. They are defined as follows.

Adjunct: A part-time or nontenure-track faculty member of an educational institution.

Asynchronous: Communication between teachers and students via email, discussions, or other ways that do not occur in real time (Faulkner-Beitzel, 2008). This term can also refer to learning activities completed by students on their own time.

Discussion board: An asynchronous virtual teaching tool that allows for questions and comments to be posted for classes or smaller groups to read.

Distance education/distance learning: A field of education that concentrates on providing learning opportunities to students who are separated by time or space from a teacher. Distance education can occur in both synchronous and asynchronous modes, through electronic media, through printed material, or through correspondence.

Face-to-face: A teaching setting in which teachers and students can see and communicate with each other synchronously. Although this could apply to technologies such as video chat, face-to-face generally refers to teachers and learners being physically present in the same place at the same time.

Learning management system (LMS) or learning platform: A web-based system through which online distance education can occur. As a brief description, a learning management system can host learning content for classes, provide assessment

opportunities, track student grades, provide communication channels for students and teachers.

Online instruction/web-based instruction: Distance education that occurs through the modality of the internet.

Synchronous: A term that refers to communication or learning activities that happen in real time.

Role of the Researcher

Disclosure of the researcher's positionality contributes to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. For the last several years, the researcher has prepared ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses as part of his professional work. Even though he has relied upon feedback from teachers in the process of course creation, he has desired to understand the experience of online teaching in the ready-to-teach format more completely. The researcher has no professional affiliation with UUW but similarities between UUW's online programs and his own provided valuable insights to inform his professional practice. Research participants were apprised of his professional background and his purposes for conducting this study. The objective of this disclosure was to establish rapport with them and a sense of empathy (Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002).

From his experience with the ready-to-teach course format, the researcher was aware of benefits that result from easing the way for instructors to facilitate an online course. However, the researcher was also aware of limitations inherent to this instructional format and that the loss of agency with regard to the content of a course can

be difficult for some instructors to negotiate. His purpose in pursuing this line of research was to have a clearer picture of all human aspects related to instructional unbundling, particularly those affecting instructors. He engaged in reflection and self-analysis regularly as a measure of monitoring potential bias.

The researcher approached this study from a constructivist point of view. His purpose was to gain insights into the nuances of the sociocultural world and acquire greater understanding of how the experiences of study participants were understood within their particular context. For the purposes of this study, that context was the UUW ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course.

Summary and Organization of Chapters

This chapter introduced readers to the need for further research regarding the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format and set forth purposes for the current study. A review of the literature in Chapter II provides a brief historical overview of the development of distance education and online learning, a description of guiding principles for online instruction, a discussion of training and professional learning for online teachers, and an introduction to the unbundling of the role of the instructor that can occur in online teaching and learning. Chapter III contains a description of the methodology used to carry out this study. Study findings can be found in Chapter IV. Chapter IV contains discussion and analysis of these findings, along with proposed recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature surrounding the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format reinforces the purposes of the current study. The first part of this chapter contains a description of andragogy, a foundational adult learning theory advanced by Knowles (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007), and an overview of Jarvis's (2006) theory of adult learning. These two concepts serve as the theoretical framework for this study. The second part of this chapter contains four major areas of the literature that provide context to the research questions of this study. They include: (a) a brief historical overview of the development of distance education and online learning; (b) skills an online instructor needs; (c) training and professional learning for online teachers; and (d) the unbundling of the role of the instructor that can occur in online teaching and learning.

Knowles and Jarvis

Principles of andragogy, the “art and science of helping adults learn,” were set forth by Malcom Knowles in the late 1960s. Knowles initially proposed four assumptions. Two more assumptions were added in later years.

1. As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature—from future

application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult is more problem-centered than subject-centered in learning.

5. The most potent motivations are internal rather than external.
6. Adults need to know why they need to learn something (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 84).

Knowles relied upon these assumptions in his work of designing learning activities for adults. The assumptions guided practice such as establishing a classroom climate where adults felt respected and teachers were not considered superior to students, but joint learners. In the years since andragogy was first presented, many debates have taken place over whether it could be classified as a theory. However, it remains a model through which adult learning can be understood (Merriam et al., 2007).

In 2006, Peter Jarvis attempted to reconcile all learning theories into one. Rather than aligning himself with any one learning paradigm, he accepted viewpoints set forth within many of them. He chose to describe learning as the transformation of an individual experiencing the world. Jarvis contended that individuals, while moving through time, undergo experiences that interrupt the way in which they understand their environment. The individual can reject those experiences and remain unchanged, or the individual can reflect on the experiences, feel emotion, and act. As a result, the “person-in-the-world” is changed through learning. The person’s whole self and life history are altered by the experience. Afterward, the new person can resume moving through time until the next moment when an experience created an opportunity for the person to reflect, feel, act, and be changed (Jarvis, 2006, p. 23).

Jarvis (2006) also explained that many different types of learning can occur, such as pre-conscious learning, non-reflective learning (for example, tasks by rote), or

reflective learning. All types of learning bring about change, but the type of learning determines the type of change the individual experiences (pp. 28-30).

The work of Knowles and Jarvis provided the framework through which the researcher of the present study formulated research questions, evaluated responses, coded data, and formulated findings. The first stage of this framework was established by viewing online instructors as adult learners (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011). Principles of andragogy were then applied as a guide to formulate the main research question regarding instructional experiences of UUW adjunct online instructors within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course.

Research subquestions were crafted with specific principles of andragogy in mind. The first principle of andragogy concerning adult learners as self-directing human beings led to the subquestion, “What perceptions and opinions does a UUW adjunct online instructor have about the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course?” The second principle of andragogy and its assertion that adults have a reservoir of past experience from which to learn led to the subquestion, “How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences? The third and fourth principles of andragogy state that adult readiness to learn is related to tasks at hand and that adults are problem-centered, respectively. These tenets led to the subquestion, “What influences the decisions a UUW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online instructor?”

Data were gathered and interpreted in light of the principles of andragogy

informing each question. This effort helped the researcher understand instructor actions, motivations, and accomplishments. The particular challenge of the ready-to-teach course environment arose from the fact that it required instructors to set aside some aspects of self-determination that they have traditionally enjoyed in a face-to-face classroom so as to enable a larger system to function (the online program at UUW). The manner in which instructors in the present study responded to the inherent restrictions of the fixed-content environment were potential learning experiences and were considered as such in the framing of this study. Jarvis's (2006) theory was also applied as a framework to understand the nature of the learning that occurred.

Brief Historical Overview of Distance Education and Online Learning

Over the last four decades, distance education and distance learning (hereafter referred to as DE/DL) has gone from being basic “correspondence courses” to being a significant component of the educational landscape. The basic circumstance of distance education is the result of a learner being separated from an instructor by physical distance (Casey, 2008). Some of the earliest distance education efforts came about due to the establishment of inexpensive, reliable mail service, allowing for regular communication between an instructor and a student working at home (Moore & Kearsley, 2005).

Correspondence education continued as the mainstay for independent study for more than 80 years, even though experiments in distance education were conducted within that time—first with radio broadcasting, and later with television instruction (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). Television enjoyed more success than radio; however, it was

not until the 1970s and the advancement of a theory of distance education that electronic technology, in combination with printed material and other methods of correspondence, began to blossom into the multi-faceted, instructionally rich options that are typical of distance education today (Holmberg, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 2005).

Eventually, satellite-delivered classes created the possibility for multi-mode live interaction between students and teachers separated by distance (Casey, 2008; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012), and the advent of computer and internet technologies catapulted DE/DL into being a significant presence in the current educational scene (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Since the availability of the internet became commonplace, DE/DL has expanded from an alternative form of education to an integral part of current teaching and learning (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). This expansion has been extensively documented by Allen and Seaman (2013, 2015).

Garrison and Shale (1990) affirmed that education “in its most fundamental form ... is an interaction among teacher, student, and subject content” (p. 4). Today, that interaction is at the heart of distance learning environments and distance education (Anderson, 2003; Croxton, 2014; Dennen, Darabi, & Smith, 2007; Hillman, Willis, & Gunawardena, 1994; Madland & Richards, 2016; Moore, 1989; Su, Bonk, Magjuka, Liu, & Lee, 2005). Interaction is a measure used in the research in distance learning (Boyce, 2011; Davidson-Shivers, 2009; Hirumi, 2002; Keeler, 2006; Kuo, Walker, Schroder, & Belland, 2014; Padilla Rodriguez & Armellini, 2014; Picciano, 2002; Rhode, 2009; Vrasidas & McIsaac, 1999). Researchers have determined that a richer level of human interaction leads to increased motivation to complete distance courses, better attitudes

towards learning, and more meaningful, in-depth learning (Bonk, Kirkley, Hara, & Dennen, 2000; Huss, Sela, & Eastep, 2015; Johnston, Killion, & Oomen, 2005; Schrire, 2006; Shearer, Gregg, & Joo, 2015).

Distance education is the result of individuals making use of technology to create learning interactions. Early correspondence courses came about because of technological improvements in that time, including the availability of printed materials and a reliable postal service. As a result, teachers and learners could compensate for physical distances that prohibited participation in traditional learning settings. Over the 20th century and into the 21st, electronic technology has increasingly provided avenues for teachers and learners to be in contact with each other.

Guiding Principles for Online Instruction

Over the last several years, researchers have studied online learning with the intent of identifying similarities and differences between it and the traditional, face-to-face educational setting. Many principles of good teaching apply in any educational setting, face-to-face or online (Bawane & Spector, 2009). For example, McKenzie and Roblyer (2000) affirmed the importance of good organization and communication skills, whether teaching online or face-to-face. Bailey (2008) emphasized the importance of the teacher as a facilitator by citing Rogers' "Guidelines for Facilitation" (1969). They include the following.

1. The facilitator is largely responsible for setting the initial mood or climate of the class experience.
2. The facilitator helps to elicit and clarify the purposes of the individuals in the class, as well as the more general purposes of the group.

3. The facilitator relies upon the desire of each student to implement those purposes that have meaning to him/her as the motivational force behind significant learning.
4. The facilitator endeavors to organize and make easily available the widest possible range of resources for learning.
5. The facilitator regards himself/herself as a flexible resource to be utilized by the group.
6. The facilitator accepts both the intellectual content and emotionalized attitudes expressed in the classroom group.
7. As the classroom climate becomes established, the facilitator is increasingly able to become a participant learner, a member of the group, expressing his/her views as an individual.
8. The facilitator takes the initiative in sharing himself/herself with the group, feelings as well as thoughts, in ways that neither demand nor impose, but represent simply a personal sharing which the student may take or leave.
9. Throughout the course, the facilitator remains alert to expressions indicative of deep or strong feelings.
10. The facilitator endeavors to recognize and accept his/her own limitations as a facilitator of learning. (Bailey, p. 164)

The characterization of a teacher as a facilitator reflects the interactive approach to online distance education that was described earlier in this literature review. Items included in the preceding list can apply to an online educator, even though the list was initially published in 1969.

The recommendation for teachers to view themselves as facilitators is common in the literature in descriptions of successful online instructors. Baran et al. (2011) demonstrated how instructor facilitation can relate to the online learning environment:

The online environment changes the fundamental nature of the interaction between the teacher, student, and content, requiring a re-examination of the roles teachers take in enhancing students' learning. Because online students are expected to take greater control of their learning process and be more active in stimulating their peers' learning, facilitation of online learning emerges as an

important role in guiding these student-centered approaches. (p. 429)

García, Arias, Murri, and Serna (2010) asserted that many instructors in higher education learn to teach through apprenticeship in their areas of subject matter expertise. As a result, they generally teach in the manner they have been taught themselves. The online teaching environment, however, requires instructors to learn new skills. Turgeon, Di Biase, and Miller (2000) highlighted the differences between face-to-face and online instruction:

The difference between conventional classroom instruction and Web-based distance education is as great as the difference between driving a car and flying a helicopter. While some of the skills one acquires from driving may be applicable to flying, they are not by themselves adequate; thus, transitioning from one to the other requires the acquisition of additional skills. Similarly, transitioning from conventional classroom instruction to Web-based, distance education requires the acquisition of skills specific to this new teaching mode. (p. 288)

For example, lecturing has long been a primary method of instruction in all levels of higher education (Awalt, 2003; Revere & Kovach, 2011). However, lecture through video recording is ineffective in the online asynchronous teaching environment. Thiede (2012) accentuated the differences between face-to-face courses and asynchronous learning environments by emphasizing the need for instructors to assume a facilitator role as opposed to lecturer.

Without the ability to stand in front of students as he or she would in a traditional classroom, an online instructor needs to find other ways to have a teaching presence. Jaggars, Edgecomb, and Stacey (2013) asserted that online instructors need to be visible and actively engaged with students in all aspects of teaching and learning in an online course. In the online environment, which can be onscreen text-heavy, students may feel

isolated. They may also feel that the teacher is indifferent to their learning unless the teacher takes purposeful steps to reveal her- or himself (Jaggars et al., 2013).

Savery (2005) included several suggestions for online instructors to follow to increase teacher presence in the course, including posting a website or other resource listing personal and professional biographical information. Additionally, teachers need to regularly update announcements and class calendars, participate actively in online discussions, and give timely and personal feedback to student work. Bonnel (2008) indicated that constant communication and feedback from the instructor increases self-reflection on the part of the learner, creating more meaningful learning experiences. Vitale (2010) and Blackmon and Major (2012) furthermore noted that continuous interaction supports student engagement and satisfaction and decreases student anxiety.

To be effective, online instructors need to develop certain qualities, skills and attributes that will help learners be able to successfully participate in online courses. By recognizing that the online environment removes some traditional teaching tools, instructors can choose other methods such as discussion board participation, asynchronous webcam video, screencasts, and audio recordings to shepherd students through course content and activities and bring about meaningful learning. Although some basic proficiencies are necessary in any teaching setting, an online instructor needs to be particularly skilled at facilitation.

Training and Professional Learning

The transition from face-to-face to online teaching can be challenging for full-

time faculty members because of the need to learn new skills (Baran et al., 2001; Borrego, 2010). Gregory and Salmon (2013) noted that few higher-education faculty members have been part of online learning as either a student or a teacher. However, as schools are adopting online teaching due to ideological or economic shifts, many faculty members find they are expected to teach online. Taylor and McQuiggan (2008) observed the need for more research on helping teachers adapt to and succeed in the online environment. Several studies have researched the role of professional training as a component of easing the transition from face-to-face to online teaching (Downing, 2013; A. Green, 2012; Henry, 2014; LoBasso, 2013; Mann, 2013; Regino, 2009; Roy, 2015). A theme that appears in this research is that teachers need the training and the quality of the training matters.

Many institutions have recognized the need for online faculty training and have actively taken steps to provide it (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). Such actions align with the views of Golden (2016), who contended that communities of practice are an important part of online faculty development. Wenger (2006) defined communities of practice as groups of individuals who share an interest in something and learn to do it better by interacting regularly. These communities allowed for the processing of ideas and the co-creation of new knowledge. Golden also affirmed that communities of practice can build a culture of support that encourages innovation and decreases the isolation often experienced by online instructors.

As has been discussed, training and professional learning can provide an important foundation for instructors who are learning to teach online. Recent research

suggests the value of making training available that leads to instructors becoming part of communities of practice for continued learning and support (Golden, 2016).

Unbundling the Role of the Teacher

Definition of Unbundling

“Unbundling” is an increasingly common term related to the field of online instruction. Gehrke and Kezar (2015) define unbundling as “the differentiation of instructional duties that were once typically performed by a single faculty member into distinct activities performed by various professionals” (p. 93). Another common description of unbundling is disaggregation of the teacher role. Although these ideas have been discussed in the literature since 1975 (Wang, p. 54), they have become more prevalent with the rise of online education.

Traditional Roles and Technology

Technology can enhance the six areas of best practice for teachers in higher education recommended by Bain (2004), which include knowing and understanding subject matter, being prepared to teach, establishing high expectations for student performance, fostering a critical learning environment, creating relationships of trust and respect with students, and assessing personal progress and efforts. However, technology can also alter these practices. Through electronic DE/DL options, teachers are no longer limited to serving only the students in their immediate physical environment (Maguire, 2005). Because of technology, the ways that instruction can be delivered to students is becoming increasingly diverse (Maguire 2005; Rockwell, Schauer, Fritz, & Marx, 1999).

Daniel (1996) referred to the Open University program in Great Britain as an example of how unbundling can help institutions achieve economies of scale. He described how distance learning courses could be created as a standard template to follow. Then individuals, other than faculty members in an instructional support role, could administer these courses. Although they would be costly to produce initially, over time these courses would be economically advantageous because they could be repeatedly duplicated and re-used. As a result, Daniel's position was that unbundling of the faculty role was a very real possibility, particularly in regard to distance learning. In the years following the publication of Daniel's work, this model has been shown to be viable with the creation and administration of template and online courses.

Paulson's (2002) discussion of unbundling included a description of the traditional faculty role, including research, teaching, and service. She pointed out that many higher education institutions have already disaggregated the faculty role by hiring part-time faculty members to carry some of the teaching burden, or by employing full-time researchers. Paulson identified the need to look at the work being done at universities through an unbundled instruction paradigm so as to correctly recognize all of the tasks actually being accomplished. She divided the function of delivering instruction into five separate activities:

- designing the course or curriculum;
- developing the course or curriculum by selecting appropriate instructional methods and course materials, or creating those course materials;
- delivering the subject matter previously selected either in person (lectures etc.) or through the use of various forms of media;
- mediating (also called "tutoring") the learning process, which helps students

understand materials in ways tailored to their individual learning styles and levels of understanding; and

- assessing individual student learning through appropriate methods and assignments designed to certify the attainment of a given level of competence. (p. 126)

Paulson indicated the need for traditional universities to look at unbundling as a way of identifying how faculty members can make the best use of their time.

First and foremost, faculty members are subject-matter experts. Their time should be devoted to helping others—students and external providers—understand and apply their subject matter. Faculty time is not well spent on writing code for Web-based instructional materials, figuring out how to make a video with bells and whistles, or researching the technology-pedagogy mix best suited for a particular type of course. Technology and instructional development specialists are better able to carry out these functions. (p. 134)

With the increased awareness of unbundling, some scholars began to recognize that the practice allowed greater institutional involvement and control in the production and dissemination of instruction (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Rice (2006) observed;

Over the past several years, a tension has emerged between the established “collegial culture” among faculty and a growing “managerial culture” in our colleges and universities.... Rethinking faculty work and structuring academic work in a way that best serves a dynamic and responsive new academy will require addressing this tension and moving toward a more collaborative culture. (p. 12)

Some of the more recent scholarship about unbundling has moved in the direction of examining its consequences. Smith (2008) studied the process of e-learning course production at three community colleges in the same community college district, looking for data that could contribute to theory related to unbundling. He considered three separate models of e-learning course production: first, the creation of a course by an individual instructor; second, the creation of a course by a group of instructors; and third, the creation of a course by a team of professionals with an instructional designer at the

center of the course creation process instead of full-time instructors. Smith found that higher degrees of unbundling led to the commodification of instructor knowledge and gave institutions, as opposed to faculty, greater control of teaching. He also found that the degree of unbundling chosen by institutions would have a profound impact upon the teaching profession, with the highest degree of unbundling potentially leading to a new type of faculty that is significantly lower in status and professional power than the traditional faculty role.

Johnson (2013) posited that the unbundling of the faculty role can limit the scope of a professor's work. Decisions made by universities to alter their missions, organization, and instructional programs, coupled with mandated changes in professional roles, can restrict what had formerly been areas of autonomy for full-time instructors.

Johnson's findings echoed those of Smith (2008) when he stated;

Coupled with other patterns of fragmentation such as the use of part-time faculty, technology clearly holds the potential to unbundle teaching from research by separating career paths into segments that primarily conduct research and train graduate students and those who use technology to teach large undergraduate classes. (p. 146)

Paris (2013) acknowledged that the need to manage costs, along with the increased availability of technological resources, has contributed to the practice of unbundling. He lamented;

Many of the things faculty members used to do—course design, selection of materials, creation of assignments, and assessment—are increasingly being organized by administrators and specialists and then turned over to often peripatetic adjuncts. (p. 17)

He compared the traditional role of faculty to artisanship of the past and the increasing results of unbundling to industrial production. However, Paris also saw the great potential

within technology, he stated:

The “industrial” path we are treading and the treatment of faculty as piece workers in a quasi-industrial way serves our students, faculty, and society poorly. Reframing and redefining the artisanship of the faculty in a new era in a way that embraces technology and innovation is imperative. (p. 20)

Paris accepted that technology will bring change but also believed that such changes can be managed so as to maximize the benefits of the older and the newer forms of education.

The Face of the Unbundled Instructional Role: Adjunct Instructors

Most of the previously cited studies of educational unbundling included a discussion of adjunct instructors as one portion of the unbundling practice. Other research has focused more specifically on adjunct instructors and their role, including benefits or drawbacks of the adjunct teaching model, characteristics of adjuncts, factors that contribute to adjunct satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and the role of the sponsoring institution in promoting adjunct success.

Benefits and drawbacks. Educational institutions benefit from adjunct faculty because part-time faculty cost less than full-time faculty (Caruth & Caruth, 2013, Rovai & Downey, 2010; Starcher & Mandernach, 2016). Furthermore, the short-term nature of most adjunct teaching contracts allows for sponsoring institutions to continually adjust the size of their teaching workforce according to need (Christensen & Eyring, 2010; Magda, Poulin, & Clinefelter, 2015; Starcher & Mandernach, 2016) and to retain only the highest-performing instructors (Christensen & Eyring, 2010; Rovai & Downey, 2010). Some, however, view these institutional advantages as being unfair to adjunct instructors (Berrett, 2012; Liftig, 2014).

Characteristics of adjuncts. Magda et al. (2015) identified that as of 2011, roughly half of all 2- and 4-year higher education faculty were part-time or adjunct (p. 4). Mandernach, Register, and O'Donnell (2015) discussed characteristics of this part-time teaching force and cautioned that adjunct teaching personnel should not be viewed as a homogeneous population. Citing the work of Gappa and Leslie (1993), Mandernach et al. divided adjunct faculty into at least four categories: (1) professionals who have full-time employment in their field of study and who choose to share their expertise through teaching; (2) individuals who have two or more part-time teaching jobs but who are not seeking full-time employment; (3) individuals approaching the end of their career who wish to maintain a connection with their profession through teaching; and (4) individuals with academic backgrounds who are seeking to enhance their resume in hopes of eventually gaining full-time teaching status. Bedford and Miller (2013) contributed one additional category of adjunct instructor: the full-time part-timer, who has enough teaching contracts with multiple institutions to achieve the equivalent of full-time employment.

Reasons for adjunct satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Studies of adjunct satisfaction and dissatisfaction indicated that many adjuncts were positive about their work. Reasons for satisfaction included teaching and working with students and flexibility in the instructor's personal life. Factors related to adjunct dissatisfaction included low pay, impermanence, and a sense of lack of respect and inclusion in comparison to full-time instructional staff (Hoyt, 2012; Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012).

Promoting adjunct success. D. W. Green (2007) noted the rapid increase of adjunct faculty as part of higher education. He recognized that the trend toward part-time instructors would not decrease due to the cost savings associated with part-time as opposed to full-time faculty. Consequently, he advocated the need for institutional leaders to “invest in and embrace adjunct faculty as a critical part of the [institutional] culture” (p. 34). Kezar (2012) similarly noted the need for institutions to recognize the needs of non-tenure track faculty and called for adjuncts to be treated as “full institutional citizens” (p. 13). Efforts to improve conditions for adjunct faculty may require significant effort (Kezar & Sam, 2013) and awareness of institutional culture (Kezar, 2013), but the result of such effort is significant: increased adjunct job satisfaction and institutional commitment, which in turn optimize adjunct contributions to their institution (Waltman et al., 2012).

Technology has altered teaching and learning. With the affordances of online DE/DL, the role of the teacher can be disaggregated or unbundled. In the literature, the topic of unbundling has moved from theoretical “what-ifs” to “here’s how we could” to “here’s what has happened so far.” Some predictions made by early theorists have come about, such as unbundling’s ability to capitalize on individual professional skills, leading to areas where costs could be trimmed from budgets and allowing universities to dramatically increase their online offerings in a short period of time (Twigg, 2003). Even so, as with most innovations, there have been some unintended and/or unexpected consequences along the way. The unbundled instructor role has resulted in the dramatic rise of the number of adjunct teaching personnel, which now constitutes the majority of

higher education faculty (Kezar, 2012). Much of the controversy surrounding unbundling comes from those who are uncomfortable removing power or scope from the traditional role of the instructor and placing it in the hands of an instructional designer or the learning institution instead (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015).

Literature Review Conclusions

Online learning as it exists today is the result of numerous influences. It began with correspondence distance education. It has continued to develop with technological innovations that have made meaningful interactions possible between learners and teachers who are separated by time, physical distance or both. To function in this new learning environment, teachers have acquired skills that are particular to or are necessary within the online setting. Even though the attainment of these skills comes through personal experience as an online teacher, learning to teach online can be facilitated by participating in professional learning and development courses and through cultivation of relationships with other online instructors in communities of practice. One practice of note within online DE/DL is the disaggregation of the role of the instructor, through which a teacher may find her or himself functioning within a role that is narrower in scope than that of a traditional, face-to-face instructor.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Qualitative Research Approach: Multiple Case Study

This study utilized a qualitative, multiple case study research design to better understand what a U UW adjunct online instructor experiences within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. Qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to gather and analyze rich, descriptive data.

Within qualitative research, case studies are effective for describing and understanding a circumstance or a phenomenon and are frequently employed when studying people and programs (Stake, 1995). As a result, case study research best addressed this study's research focus by explaining issues related to "how" and "why," by not requiring behavioral control, and by placing the central focus on contemporary events (Yin, 2009). Additionally, case study research looks at overall context and seeks to discover new insights and meaning in a situation for those involved.

A single case study would provide a meaningful description of one study participant, but the purpose of this study was to gain a variety of perspectives of instructors utilizing a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course, thereby capturing a broader range of experience. The multiple case study approach allowed the researcher to interview many individuals within the same constraints of the fixed-content course. The researcher then placed data from all study participants side-by-side for the purpose of comparison and contrast.

Because ready-to-teach courses are most often prepared by those who will not ultimately administer them, a description of this form of online education is incomplete without the perspective of the instructor who guides students through the course as it occurs. Considering the perspective of 10 individuals having a common experience of being the instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course led to a more thorough understanding of the features of the phenomenon. The greater understanding generated by the study data can contribute to policies and practices related to online teaching in this particular format.

Research Design

U UW was identified as an excellent source of data for the study's research questions because of its extensive ready-to-teach, fixed-course online offerings. The researcher contacted the director of U UW online programs to gain approval for the project.

Interview questions were written to reflect Knowles' (1980) principles of andragogy. They were subsequently piloted and refined with a professional colleague of the researcher who is an adjunct online instructor for U UW but not a study participant.

Stake (2006) indicated that the benefits of multiple case studies would be limited with fewer than four cases or more than 10; consequently, the researcher concluded that a sample size of 10 would yield meaningful data. The researcher also determined that each adjunct online instructor would be a single case, following Stake's assertion that in case studies, a case may be an individual. According to multiple case study protocol,

information about each individual is gathered and included in the study to illustrate separate contexts.

Each case to be studied is a complex entity located in its own situation. It has its special contexts or backgrounds.... The program or phenomenon operates in many different situations. One purpose of a multicase study is to illuminate some of these many contexts....

Qualitative case study calls for the examination of experience in these situations. Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) pointed out that qualitative research is based on a view that social phenomena, human dilemmas, and the nature of cases are situational. The study of situations reveals *experiential knowledge*. (p. 12)

Creation of a Purposive Sample

Stake (2006) indicated that for qualitative fieldwork, researchers will usually select a purposive sample of cases to build in variety and create opportunities for intensive study (p. 24). To assure that all research participants were qualified and able to contribute to this multiple case study of teachers using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course, they were required to meet specific criteria. First, all participants had to be online adjunct instructors employed by U UW. Second, all adjunct online instructors were required to have a background of face-to-face teaching prior to teaching online. Third, participants needed a minimum of two semesters' experience as an online instructor. Fourth, they needed to be located within a 50-mile radius of the researcher. This distance limitation accommodated the research process but did not significantly limit the diversity of the potential research participants because that geographic area included approximately one third of all U UW online adjunct instructors.

Identification of research participants occurred through two stages of selection. In the first stage, U UW online education coordinators did a demographic search to identify

instructors who lived in the required geographic area. After filtering potential participants by locale, UUW online education coordinators provided email contact information directly to the researcher along with a description of courses taught by each adjunct. The researcher sent a personal email directly to 403 online instructors, 190 females and 213 males. This message contained the criteria for research participants (listed in the preceding paragraph) and an invitation for any who would be willing to participate to contact the researcher personally via email or telephone. The message described the purpose of the study and assured that the researcher would follow IRB procedures and ethical standards.

In the second stage of selection, the researcher considered the 54 instructors who responded to the email message, 28 females and 26 males. After screening out those who did not meet study criteria, the researcher selected 10 participants, five females and five males. Selection occurred following researcher consideration of the following information.

- Courses taught (so as to avoid duplication among study participants)
- Levels of education
- Professional background
- Years of experience with UUW
- Geographic location
- Rapport with researcher in preliminary conversations

Data Collection

Stake (2006) indicated that for single-case and multiple-case studies, the most common methods of case study are “observation, interview, coding, data management, and interpretation” (p. 27). Data for this study were collected according to these methods.

An in-depth semi-structured interview with study participants was a primary source of data. Other sources of data included interview follow-up conversations, email conversations, researcher views of participant courses, participant reviews of finding drafts, telephone communication, written documents, and researcher field notes. In light of study research questions, these methods were appropriate for the case being studied.

The first interview lasted approximately one hour and was held at a location of the study participant's choosing. The purpose of the initial interview was to gain participants' perspectives related to the central question and the subquestions. After reading and signing the letter of information (see Appendix A), participants shared their perspectives in response to questions in the interview protocol (see Appendix B). The semistructured format provided the capability to explore related ideas that emerged during the interview process. During the interview, all participants selected a pseudonym for themselves to be used in study data. All first interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Participants were sent a transcription of their interview for member checking within a week after the initial interview. They were invited to review the transcription to clarify ambiguous statements or add further thoughts that may have occurred to them after the first conversation. Participants sent written clarifications, corrections, or additions to the researcher, which were in turn studied before the follow-up communication so as to renew memory and stimulate additional thought. One research participant also shared with the researcher written remarks that were prepared prior to the first interview, which were added to the study data. See Table 1 for a visual representation of data gathered.

Table 1
Sources of Data from Study Participants

Name	Interview	Interview follow-up (member checking)	Email conversations	Researcher view of course	Participant review of findings draft	Telephone communication	Written documents	Researcher field notes
Gardner	X	X	X					X
Abbey	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Frank	X	X	X	X	X			X
Jack	X	X	X			X		X
Ginger	X	X	X	X	X			X
Pascal	X	X	X	X	X			X
Jay	X	X						X
Mary	X	X	X	X	X			X
Sophia	X	X	X					X
Bob	X	X	X	X				X
Total	10/10 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	9/10 (90%)	6/10 (60%)	5/10 (50%)	1/10 (10%)	1/10 (10%)	10/10 (100%)

After participants reviewed transcripts for clarity and to verify that they had represented themselves accurately, follow-up communication was arranged. The follow-up conversations allowed study participants to share additional insights that had occurred since the first interview and to elaborate on ideas that had been previously expressed. Follow-up conversations occurred in person, via exchange of email, or via telephone according to participant preference.

As a supplement to the transcribed interview and follow-up conversations, the researcher's personal thoughts and impressions were recorded in field notes following interviews or other communication. These notes assisted in the process of triangulation and supplemented participants' comments as themes emerged.

IRB protocols were followed, including care to preserve participant confidentiality. When details shared by study participants in the data collection process could potentially reveal participant identity, the researcher substituted alternate information. However, care was taken to preserve the integrity of the original data. No meanings of participant contributions were altered through the masking of sensitive details.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed and represented according to the following steps established by Creswell (2013).

Data Organization

Interviews were transcribed and saved. Observations were recorded in field notes

according to study participants. Emails, texts, screenshots, and screencasts were categorized according to study participants and saved in electronic repositories.

Reading and Memoing

Interviews were studied and initial codes were created according to the research questions (Yin, 2009, p. 128).

Describing the Data into Codes and Themes

Descriptions of each case were written in the form of instructor biographical information and in researcher field notes. The institutional context of cases was also described in background explanation of UUW online programs.

Classifying the Data into Codes and Themes

Secondary codes were created according to researcher description (Creswell, 2013, p. 185). Codes were then combined into broader themes in the process Creswell refers to as categorical aggregation (p. 199).

Interpreting and Representing the Data

In cross-case analysis, themes from each case were compared with other cases for similarities and differences (Stake, 2006, p. 39). Prevalent themes from all participants were shaped into five key study findings. Data frequency tables were created to represent information contributing to each finding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012).

Theoretical Analysis

Yin (2009) described the role of theory in case study: “The simple goal is to have

a sufficient blueprint for your study, and this requires theoretical propositions, usefully noted by Sutton and Staw (1995) as ‘a [hypothetical] story about why acts, events, structure, and thoughts occur’ (p. 378)” (p. 36).

Findings were viewed through the lens of Knowles’s (1980) principles of andragogy and Jarvis’s (2006) adult learning theory. Findings were also considered in terms of the entire study for overall soundness. Knowles’ principles of andragogy had previously informed the writing of each study question. As a result, in the process of data collection and analysis, research question responses and potential findings were considered in light of the principle of andragogy associated with the question to assess participant responses meaningfully. Descriptions of learning or change experienced by participants were compared to Jarvis’s (2006) theory of learning to gain greater understanding.

Trustworthiness

Because of the subjective nature of qualitative research, scholars have advocated for validation strategies to be used to establish trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). The ultimate aim of the study was to produce findings that were consistent with the data that was gathered and for transferability of findings to other situations.

For study credibility, communication was prolonged and in-depth so as to faithfully represent participants’ experiences. Data were acquired from interviews, follow-up conversations, emails, observations, field notes, and the supplemental writings

supplied by one study participant. Consistency between the various sources of data was sought as findings emerged.

To provide evidence of the findings, an audit trail consisting of field notes was maintained which chronicled the development of the researcher's thoughts. Notes written in the margins of interview transcriptions recorded researcher observations made during the research process. A professional colleague of the researcher who was experienced in qualitative research reviewed the data for consistency in a peer debriefing. He studied transcripts, field notes, coding themes, findings, and analysis categories to verify that the researcher had followed sound qualitative practice and had legitimately represented the data in the creation of findings (see Appendix C).

Clarifying feedback concerning researcher understanding and interpretations was sought from participants in the process of data collection and transcription. When the researcher was uncertain of details or of the meaning of phrases or ideas, he contacted study participants for clarification. As was previously described, each interview or conversation was transcribed and sent to study participants for their review and approval. Furthermore, a draft of findings was shared with study participants so as to ensure that their experiences were accurately represented. In the process of writing the research narrative, rich description was included to help readers make decisions about whether or not findings from this qualitative study can be transferred to other settings or situations (Schram, 2003).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this multiple case qualitative study was to explore instructor perspectives about using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. The main research question was, “How does a UUW adjunct online instructor describe his or her instructional experiences within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course?” To gain depth and breadth in the topic, three subquestions were also pursued:

1. What perceptions and opinions does a UUW adjunct online instructor have about the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format?
2. How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?
3. What influences the decisions a UUW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online teacher?

The researcher believed that providing a better understanding of what it means to be an instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course was an important contribution to the body of knowledge concerning the capabilities and limitations of this form of online distance education. This study also illustrated some of the effects of instructional unbundling, or the disaggregation of the traditional responsibilities of the teacher in online courses.

This chapter contains a description of the setting in which the UUW adjunct online instructors function and a brief introduction to the instructors who participated in the study, although some details have been adapted to avoid providing information through which any participants might be identified. This chapter also contains findings

obtained from 10 in-depth interviews, follow-up conversations, and electronic communication between the researcher and research participants.

Setting

Context

All research participants were employed by an educational institution that the researcher refers to under the pseudonym “Unidentified University of the West” (U UW). U UW is a private, religiously-affiliated school in the Pacific Northwest that offers liberal arts programs. One of U UW’s purposes is to promote spiritual growth in students as they pursue secular learning. All teachers are encouraged to incorporate connections between the subject they teach, faith, and spirituality. Several thousand students attend on-campus, approximately 70% of whom come from five western states. The remainder of the student body hails from the remaining 45 states and 100 other countries.

Because the setting of the phenomenon provided context to the experiences of the research participants, details about the university were included in the report of the findings. Individuals reading this study who are familiar with U UW’s online programs may recognize the school. However, this study was not undertaken to evaluate U UW’s online programs. The use of the pseudonym reflects the researcher’s deliberate choice to keep the study centered on the experience of instructors using the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses instead of the university that employs them. Comments from study participants, both positive and negative, are subjective and reflect the participants’ perspectives only.

UUW's Online Outreach

Despite recent expansions of on-campus facilities that have increased the capacity for student enrollment, leaders of the religious denomination that sponsors UUW, in concert with university leadership, desired to provide the opportunity for more students to receive an education through UUW. Online education has been identified as a vehicle through which university educational resources can be offered to students throughout the world.

Expansion of online programs. Since 2000, UUW's online programs have been piloted, refined, and expanded. The first online offerings were independent study courses prepared by another university, thereby introducing the ready-to-teach, fixed-content model to UUW. In subsequent iterations of online programs, the ready-to-teach, fixed-content model has been retained.

By 2007, the first online bachelor degree was offered. A year later, an online learning initiative was launched that featured cohort-based learning with courses then being produced by UUW through partnerships between instructional designers and UUW faculty. All learning outcomes for online courses were aligned with equivalent campus courses, and off-campus adjunct faculty with high levels of training were recruited and hired to be the online instructional staff.

As of fall 2016, UUW offered 289 online courses and employed 1,565 online instructors. On-campus students may take online courses in addition to those attended face-to-face and can apply credit earned from online courses toward their degree programs. Online-only students have several certificate, associate, or bachelor degree

options available to them. All of U UW's programs, whether online or on-campus, have received the same national accreditation.

Prematriculation Directions program. U UW also sponsors a blended-learning program referred to as Directions to help students who need preparation to successfully enroll in higher education. The Directions program currently features nine possible online courses to increase student skills, along with a weekly face-to-face gathering for participants in local areas. Successful completion of the Directions program satisfies residency and admissions requirements for U UW, thereby allowing students to continue their education by pursuing a U UW degree online. As of fall 2016, there were more than 36,000 total students in the combined online and Directions programs.

Organizational Structure

Another part of the setting reflected in comments of research participants includes the organization structure in which the adjunct online instructors function, as represented in Figure 1. Each adjunct online instructor belongs to an instructional group with an instructional group leader (referred to as an IGL). The IGL, who reports to full-time online education personnel on campus, conducts monthly group inservice meetings, both synchronous and asynchronous, using internet conferencing tools and periodically visits all courses in the group to verify instructor performance. When instructors have questions about teaching-related issues, they turn to their instructional group leader.

One experienced instructor from each online course serves as a course representative (called a CR) who interacts with a full-time faculty member on campus known as a course content expert (CCE). The CCE has responsibility for the instructional

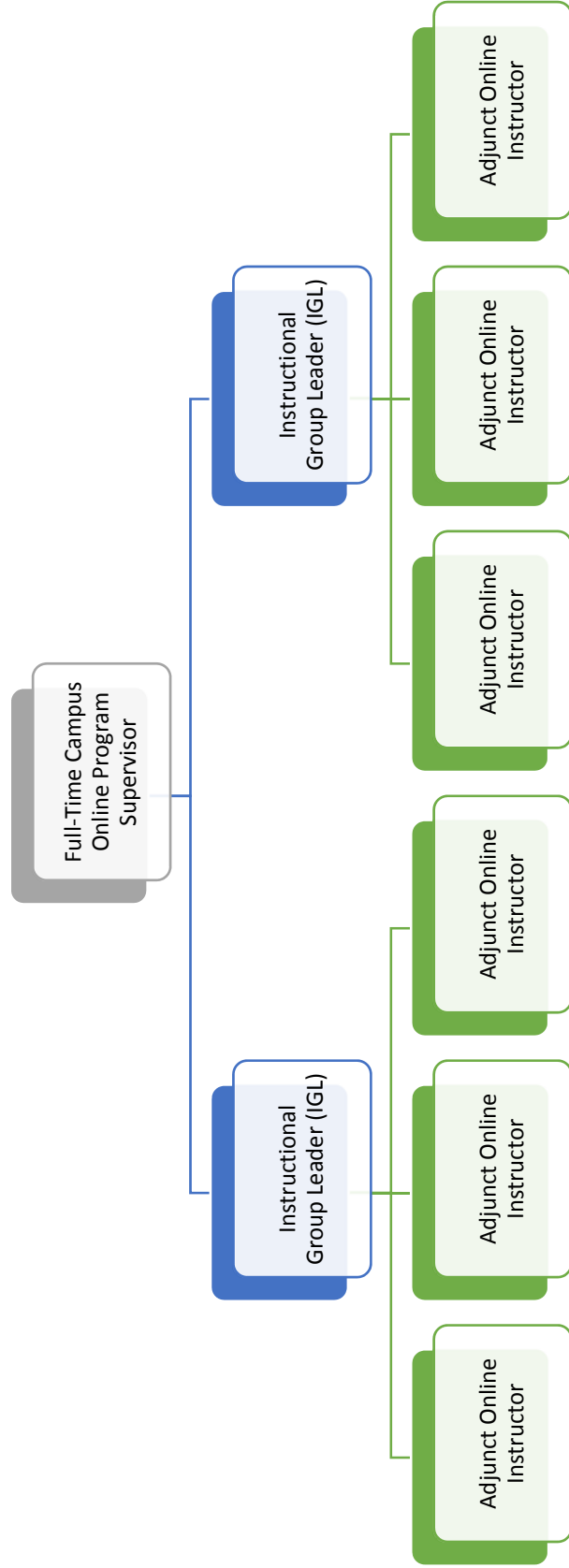


Figure 1. Instructional group organizational chart.

content of the online course. An instructional designer employed by the university works with each CCE to build the course in the learning management system according to university standards and to maintain it afterward. When instructors notice a problem with an online course, they report the issue to their instructional group leader. The group leader relates the issue to the course representative, who then communicates with the course content expert. The CCE reaches out to the instructional designer, who accesses the master online course and resolves the problem. Any changes in the master course are immediately reflected in all sections of the course. This process is represented in Figure 2.

Study Participants

Ten instructors contributed to this study as research participants, five women and five men. Although they share the core experience of being instructors in UUW's ready-to-teach, fixed-content format online courses and they all come from a face-to-face teaching background, they were selected to represent diversity of experience in UUW online programs, including years of employment as an adjunct online instructor and courses taught. After analyzing the data, the researcher determined that it would be necessary to change some potentially identifying information to preserve participant anonymity. When the name of a course being taught was concealed, a similar course was

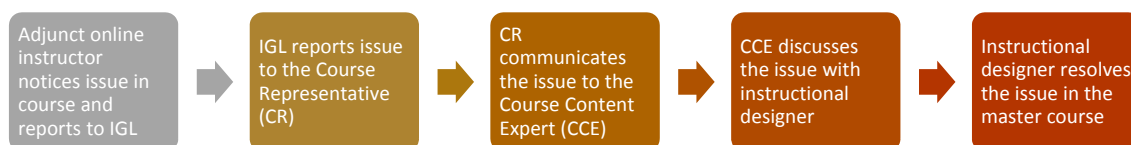


Figure 2. Issue reporting process for errors in online courses.

substituted that preserved the context and integrity of the participant's comments without revealing personal identity.

Gardner. Age: 60-69. Gardner first taught while pursuing a doctoral degree and enjoyed the experience. Although he was not a teacher in his professional career, he taught part-time at a community college for many years in both face-to-face and online settings. Now, in retirement, Gardner continues to teach two sections of family relations courses for UUW. He has been a UUW adjunct online instructor for 5 years.

Abbey. Age: 40-49. Abbey taught social change and advocacy for four semesters online at UUW. After completing her master's degree, teaching online was the best employment option that was compatible with the needs of her family. Her online teaching experience includes courses she designed herself as well as being an instructor in UUW's fixed-content courses.

Frank. Age: 30-39. Frank began his teaching career in secondary education. After earning a master's degree, he transitioned into his current professional work as an instructional designer for a state university. He teaches a course entitled "Basic Algebra and Principles of Finance" for UUW's Directions program as additional part-time employment. Frank has 3 years' experience as a UUW adjunct online instructor. He is currently a doctoral student.

Jack. Age: 50-59. Jack's professional life has been in international business, with many assignments taking him and his family to live out of the country. After completing a master's degree, Jack taught as an adjunct instructor for a for-profit university and became one of the school's earliest teachers to transition to the online format. Jack

currently teaches an online course about the principles of economics for U UW. He has been a U UW adjunct online instructor for 3 years.

Ginger. Age: 50--. Ginger's experience as an online adjunct instructor for U UW began two semesters ago after she left secondary education and pursued online teaching with U UW instead. Her course is entitled "Foundations of Civilization II," in which she and her students explore the potential of the human spirit through disciplines such as literature, art, history, philosophy, music, and politics.

Pascal. Age: 50-59. Pascal began teaching in secondary education, transitioned to teaching at the college level after earning a doctorate, and then became a corporate consultant. He still enjoys teaching, however, and is the instructor for a life skills class in U UW's Directions program. Pascal has taught other courses online for U UW over the last 7 years.

Jay. Age: 40-49. Although her earliest career aspirations were to be a teacher, Jay completed a degree in accounting and worked full-time as an accountant for 2 years prior to raising her family. Later, she enjoyed teaching accounting as an adjunct face-to-face instructor for a state college. However, a new accounting position required her to relocate and travel to the campus proved to be impractical. Jay subsequently began teaching financial accounting for U UW as an online adjunct two semesters ago.

Mary. Age: 40-49. Initially, Mary intended to teach business classes, but as computer use and word processing skills became necessary, she began teaching students how to use technology instead. She has taught an online word processing course for U UW for the past two semesters, but this evolution in her career came after several years

in higher and secondary education, both public and private.

Sophia. Age: 30-39. After earning an MBA, Sophia was the associate dean of faculty for a private, for-profit university. This work led her to understand online education from an administrative viewpoint. Subsequently she became a face-to-face adjunct instructor for an MBA program, an online adjunct instructor for a basic math skills course at UUW, and a tenure-track professor of business at a state college. She has developed new online courses as well as being an instructor in ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses.

Bob. Age: 30-39. Bob began teaching face-to-face and online business courses for a for-profit university after completing an MBA. A few years later, he took a staff position with a state university that led to teaching opportunities. Eventually, he earned a doctorate in education and began his own business ventures. He teaches a business course for UUW as a sideline to his personal business pursuits.

Findings

Data were gathered from in-depth interviews, follow-up conversations for additional participant feedback, emails, and researcher viewings of online courses and participant-created instructional artifacts. Reliability of the data were enhanced by member checking of transcripts, researcher field notes, participant reviews of finding drafts, and external data audit (Creswell, 2013). Interviews and all other sources of data were studied and initially coded according to the current study's research questions (Yin, 2009, p 128). Secondary codes were created according to researcher description of data.

All codes were then combined into broader themes in the process of categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher used cross-case analysis of the broader themes to look for answers to research questions. The purpose of this analysis was consider all cases side-by-side and to obtain a better understanding across all cases of instructional experiences UUW adjunct online instructors have when using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. Each study participant's case contributed to the understanding of this experience. Five major findings emerged from this study, as represented in Figure 3.

Finding 1: Instructors' Positive and Negative Perceptions

Instructors' positive and negative perceptions of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format were the result of a complex interplay between multiple factors, including instructors' recognition of university programmatic needs, instructors' personal preferences, and issues related to course content and design.



Figure 3. Representation of study findings.

**Finding 2: Connections with and Divergences
from Previous Instructor Experiences**

The ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format has created an instructional environment that simultaneously connects with and diverges from instructors' previous face-to-face teaching experiences.

Finding 3: Formative Influences on Instructors

Multiple influences helped study participants learn to be an instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course.

Finding 4: Instructors' Personal Influence on Courses

Instructors used nonprescribed aspects of ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses to fulfill their role in individualized ways.

Finding 5: Professional and Personal Instructor Motivation

Commitment to online education, love of teaching, and fulfillment of personal needs motivated adjunct online instructors to continue in their employment with U UW.

Presentation of Discussion

Each of the findings will be discussed, including details that substantiate and explain the findings. Using "thick description," which includes context, thoughts and feelings of participants, and researcher description and interpretation of social action (Ponterotto, 2006), the researcher illustrated a range of experiences, with the hope of allowing readers to feel they are part of the study and better understand the experiences

of the research participants. Some aspects of participants' experiences were directly impacted by the ready-to-teach course format, while other aspects were common to all forms of online instruction. This study provided a view into the overall experience of UUW adjunct online instructors using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course.

The use of quotations allowed the research participants to speak for themselves. Quotations drawn from interview transcripts, conversations, and electronic communication are an effort to illustrate a variety of perspectives from the participants, thereby demonstrating the complex richness of the participants' experiences.

Discussion of Finding 1: Instructors' Positive and Negative Perceptions

Instructors' positive and negative perceptions of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format were the result of a complex interplay between multiple factors, including instructors' recognition of university programmatic needs, instructors' personal preferences, and issues related to course content and design. The primary source of data for this finding was research subquestion 1, "What perceptions and opinions do UUW adjunct online instructors have about the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format?" See Tables 2 and 3 for a visual representation of the data presented in this discussion.

Positive perceptions. In the literature related to unbundling, scholars have described advantages that come from distributing responsibilities related to production of an online course between several individuals instead of requiring each instructor to shoulder the burden alone. These benefits include allowing the instructor to focus on being a subject matter expert and letting others handle technological issues, eliminating

Table 2

Finding 1 Data Frequency Chart: Positive Aspects

Name	Ease	Helps university	Consistency within university online instruction	Saves time	Benefit to students
Gardner Abbey			X		
Frank	X			X	
Jack			X		X
Ginger					
Pascal				X	
Jay	X			X	
Mary	X		X		X
Sophia	X	X			
Bob		X			
Total	4/10 (40%)	2/10 (20%)	3/10 (30%)	3/10 (30%)	2/10 (20%)

Note. Eight out of 10 (80%) contributing positive aspects.

redundancy of effort by reducing the need to rebuild courses repeatedly, and increasing the ability of the sponsoring institution to influence course design and content (Paulson, 2002; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Twigg, 2003). Eight of the 10 study participants shared positive observations about the ready-to-teach, fixed-content format. Comments were divided among the following categories:

- Benefits for students
- Benefits for instructors
- Benefits for the university

Positive comments align with assertions in the literature concerning benefits of unbundling in online courses.

Table 3

Finding 1 Data Frequency Chart: Negative Aspects

Name	Personal depletion/ disengagement	Lack of university responsiveness	Cannot control content			Cannot control design			
			Would choose other	Inaccurate/ outdated/ errors	Course flow	Course activity requirements	Assessment	Workload	
Gardner		X	X		X	X			
Abbey	X	X	X	X					
Frank						X			
Jack							X		
Ginger	X		X			X	X		
Pascal			X				X	X	
Jay						X			
Mary									
Sophia						X			X
Bob		X	X	X					
Total	2/10 (20%)	3/10 (30%)	5/10 (50%)	2/10 (20%)	1/10 (10%)	5/10 (50%)	3/10 (30%)	2/10 (20%)	

Note. Nine out of 10 (90%) contributing negative aspects.

Benefits for students. Two sample excerpts from study participants illustrate benefits for students, including internal consistency within the course and consistency between all university online courses.

- *It's very easy for [students] to work through the course content. They don't have to worry about it changing from one lesson to another because a professional has designed it and then [has] gone back over it and over it and over it just to make sure that everything's consistent throughout the whole course.*
- *I like the fact that [students] can get used to and feel comfortable in a learning environment. And I think if the school didn't have that and the teachers were picking [content], the differences could be a lot broader. [Fixed-content] brings structure to the learning.*

Benefits for instructors. Excerpts from study participant comments below illustrate ways that the ready-to-teach format helps instructors.

- *Not all instructors, and more often adjunct, aren't trained in instructional design or may not be that good at it. They may not know how to create assignments or assessments to align with objectives. So for canned classes [ready-to-teach courses], that is fantastic because you know they are all having to meet the same level of competency.*
- *I like being able to take something that's already developed and just being able to work with that.... I don't have to go out and search and find the content and organize it in such a way that I'm going to teach it.*
- *You can dive right in. It's there for you, your prep time is very low.... You're not having to put it all in the system and set the due dates...there's a lot of legwork that comes into it when you build your own class.*

These observations indicate that the ready-to-teach format compensates for varying levels of expertise among faculty members with regard to strategic assignment creation, reduces the amount of time required to assemble course materials, and takes care of time-consuming tasks, such as setting due dates.

Benefits for the university. Two interview excerpts demonstrate that the ready-to-

teach, fixed-content format provided the university with some distinct advantages with regard to rapidly training new instructors while still maintaining accreditation standards.

- *I think it's a great way to get a new instructor going, to [help them] understand from the institution's perspective what ... accomplishing the goal of teaching course objectives looks like. And whether or not I agree with the methodology of arriving at that point, it's good to get the feel of what [the university] felt, what gets you there.*
- *I'm always worrying about the accreditation stuff.... Having a canned [ready-to-teach, fixed-content] course where it's easy to [compile accreditation] information makes it easier on the [administrative] end to do that. If [instructors] are not the ones compiling reports, it's hard to see why things have to be structured a certain way. It's like, 'Why can't we just have more freedom?' ... Until you're the one putting those reports together, it's harder to understand some of the stuff that's pretty important, that it stay rigid."*

Negative perceptions. Benefits notwithstanding, nine of the 10 study participants identified obstacles they faced due to the unbundling of the instructor role in their online courses. Challenges are discussed in two categories with subdivisions in each category.

- Challenges due to limitations on the instructor, including effects on instructor attitude and motivation and connections with students, and
- Challenges due to course content and design, including concerns over student workload, discussion board issues, and difficulties with assessments.

Comments revealed that instructors and students alike are affected by the limitations of the fixed-content format.

Challenges due to limitations on the instructor. The inability to select course content led some instructors to feel less ownership of their course and less valued as an expert in their subject, as illustrated in these remarks.

- *By about halfway through [my first] semester I was kind of disappointed that anybody—I felt like anybody—could do this. You know, it didn't take any kind of genius to be able to [teach the course] because the content was there. I didn't have any opportunity to write any of the lessons or the tests or anything or the activities, and so I felt like, "Hmm. Okay, well, it doesn't really matter*

what I know.”

- *I have to follow what someone else does in their class. And that’s really hard to do. Any teacher will tell you that they can go and observe a teacher a thousand times. They will never ever be able to reproduce what that teacher does in their classroom, because they’re not that teacher. And that’s the real hard part about [fixed-content]. It’s not my class.*
- *[In my course, I’m showing students,] “Hey, here’s how you can get around here,” “Here’s how you can do this assignment,” “Here’s a strategy,” ... Sometimes [it] feels like I’m more of a study skills teacher than I am a content teacher.*

Effects on attitude and motivation. Some instructors noted that the limitations of the fixed-content course had a negative effect on their attitude and motivation.

- *When I have had more content control, [I have been] more engaged in the course content, more interested in what I was teaching.... I was constantly thinking about the content and making little tweaks and changes, continual improvement ideas.... As we have moved to totally fixed-content...I’ve noticed that I have really shut down in that way of thinking.*
- *[As instructors] we are putting out but our buckets aren’t being filled because there’s no creative “ahh” experience or production. We’re not producing from our knowledge and our resources, our experience.... And so then we’re not really being filled or fulfilled in that way.... I am having to create ways to fill my buckets through other avenues.*

Connections with students. Some instructors recognized that by not having control of course content, they lost an opportunity for connection with students. The following interview excerpts demonstrate ways that instructors have recognized the fixed-content format affects the student experience.

- *The lack of connectedness [with students] is difficult in general with online teaching, but even more so when you can’t control the content.*
- *[Fixed-content is] presented to you as if it were on a silver platter, saying, “Look how easy this is to just plug and play and implement.” But if I’m a student, if I’m looking at it through that lens, I don’t want plug and play professors. I want unique perspectives. I don’t want a professor who is just getting the content whispered into one ear and parroting it out their mouth.*

Challenges due to course content and design. The traditional instructor role entails general responsibility for matters related to what to teach and how to teach it. Statements gathered from research participants regarding challenges due to course content and course design reflect various aspects of the difficulty that came from instructors being obligated to conform to someone else's way of thinking.

- *I understand that we cannot have control over content because of accreditation issues. Also, since we have multiple course sections, they all need to be aligned. [But] I don't like my students to think that I have developed the content in the course I teach. ... I don't want to claim the content because it is not what I would have done.*
- *The course that I'm teaching is very disjointed. ... I have complained to the department and to our course representative ever since my first class about the poor course design. When I've gone [to visit UUW campus] they initially said, 'Would you like to re-design the course?' and because of personal conflicts the on-campus person [CCE] had, it just got put off and put out. ... The publisher has some absolutely great material and they've been talking about integrating that for the last four years and still have not done so.*
- *One of the problems that I see is that the full-time instructor who took this course and worked with the designer to design the course, first of all, never taught an online course as far as I can tell. And she took basically a course that she had been teaching in person and made an online course out of it.*
- *We used to have some assignments [in the course] that were just so good. But when the new professor [CCE] came to UUW he got rid of them because he wasn't familiar with how they would work in online and the online developer wasn't familiar with our content. They just disappeared. If a professor has never taken an online course, or learned how to develop or teach online, then they might not think of the best way to present the content.*

Concerns over student workload. The inability to adjust student workload was a concern for two study participants, as illustrated in the interview excerpts cited below.

- *It's too much for work for the kids who are lower a little bit. It's been kind of frustrating.*
- *I think it has a lot of homework in that class. Obviously, they had a good team of instructional designers and it was very [thoroughly] thought through, but I*

personally disagree with the workload. ... I don't know enough about their research and logic as to why they put [some assignments] in there. And so because I don't know the logic or the reasoning, it's difficult for me to embrace the pieces that I don't like.

Discussion board issues. Discussion boards figure into the design of UUW's ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses. Excerpts from study participant interviews reflect issues instructors experienced because of discussion boards.

- *I have never been a fan of discussion boards in online [education]. I think they've become very contrived. A lot of cut and paste. A lot of dittoes. It's really hard to make them work without putting enormous amount of effort into it as an instructor.*
- *There's a lot of debate on whether or not discussion boards are actually effective teaching tools. The initial post to express your opinion is usually pretty useful. And then those two [required follow-up] posts, you're hoping that they'll start a conversation, have a discussion like you would have in class. But if you read them, most of them are "I agree! What a great viewpoint!" It's like 50 different ways to say, "Uh huh." And it really feels like busywork to the students.*
- *Some of the discussions in one of the courses were too "here's the content, tell me what the right answer is." It was very directed and that didn't bode well in my pedagogical approach in how an online discussion should be. It should create a little bit of debate, there's no right answer, we should be able to have a discussion.*

The preceding comments illustrated that challenges can arise from the philosophy of how course design elements are incorporated or from the nature of the content that instructors are obligated to employ.

Difficulties with assessments. To guarantee the same standards of assessment across all sections of courses, UUW relies upon randomized automated question banks. The following interview excerpts reflect difficulties that some adjunct online instructors have faced because of their inability to participate in the assessment process.

- *One thing I don't like is what they pick for the testing modules or the quiz*

modules. I wish I had control of that. I wish I could go to their databank and pick the questions that I think are more relevant.

- *[When I was teaching a math course,] I didn't get answer keys. Because we do online, you get the random question generators and algorithms to figure out the right answer. So you never have a real good answer key to give real good feedback.... And I couldn't go through and work the problem because their problem is not what everybody else had.*
- *The exams concern me greatly.... By about the third or fourth week, you know your students if you're spending a lot of time with them. And so you know when they're getting it and when they're not. So when you've got excellent students that are working so hard and they're really making remarkable progress, but they're still failing their exams, you know there's a problem.*
- *[In my previous teaching] I was used to writing and then assessing based upon the curriculum that I had taught. And also I was used to being able to adjust the activities or the tests based upon the strengths and weaknesses I saw in the students' learning. So if I saw that, "They're just not getting this," or whatever, I could tweak my tests for that. And we just don't have any of that ability.*

Summary of finding 1 discussion. Instructors recognized that the ready-to-teach, fixed-content format provided some advantages with regard to consistency within each course and consistency between courses. However, instructors also noted that the inability to alter course content diminished their sense of expertise and course ownership. Furthermore, instructors described challenges they faced because of course requirements upon students over which instructors had no control.

Discussion of Finding 2: Connections with and Divergences from Previous Instructor Experiences

The ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format has created an instructional environment that simultaneously connects with and diverges from instructors' previous face-to-face teaching experiences. The primary source of data for

this finding was research subquestion 2, “In what ways does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for U UW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course aligns with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?” See Table 4 for a visual representation of the data presented in this discussion.

Similarities to face-to-face teaching settings. All instructors in this study taught in face-to-face settings prior to being an online instructor for U UW. They were invited to share observations about similarities they have noted between being an instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course and teaching students in person. Five of the 10 study participants identified similarities to face-to-face teaching. Their remarks were divided among the following categories:

- Student mastery of course content
- Students’ personal challenges
- Interpersonal aspects of teaching

Student mastery of course content. Study participant interview excerpts below addressed the need for all students, face-to-face or online, to understand the purpose of the course and how to succeed in it.

- *Commonalities between face-to-face and online teaching would be that students still have needs. They need to understand the course and get their questions answered. They still need clear instructions.*
- *One thing I just encountered this week is that the concepts that tripped up my junior high kids are tripping up these students too. Even though they were taught by a different person in a different way, in a different method or format, it’s still confusing a little bit. ... I know those common errors or common difficulties are there no matter how the course is taught.*
- *The content has been very similar when I’ve taught these kinds of courses in person. It’s about the same. They’re all different levels of students. You have to do your best to reach out to and find out their different strengths and weaknesses and try to help them through those weaknesses.*

Table

Finding 2 Data Frequency Chart

Name	Similarities ^a			Differences ^b		
	Student mastery of course content	Students' personal challenges	Interpersonal aspects of teaching	Assessing student comprehension	Dynamics of communication with students	Relationship of the instructor to course content
Gardner				X		
Abbey	X				X	X
Frank						
Jack				X		
Ginger	X	X				X
Pascal			X	X		
Jay			X	X		
Mary	X				X	
Sophia				X		X
Bob		X			X	
Total	3/10 (30%)	2/10 (20%)	2/10 (20%)	5/10 (50%)	3/10 (30%)	3/10 (30%)

^a Five out of 10 (50%) contributing similarities.

^b Nine out of 10 (90%) contributing differences.

As the comments illustrated, complex topics can be challenging for students in any learning setting. The instructor's work to help students succeed is the same, regardless of course format.

Students' personal challenges. Life challenges can interfere with student success in any learning setting. Comments excerpted below reveal problems students face and the associated work of the instructor to deal with them.

- *It doesn't matter whether you're 12 or 60, when students lack confidence in their abilities or when they are struggling with some things at home or in their personal life or when they just don't feel smart, or whatever it may be, that same frustration, the same things tend to trip them up. You see them give up. You see them lose hope a little bit. So age doesn't seem to matter, nor does the modicum of how they're being taught.*
- *Life happens. I can't tell you how many students will write and say, "I'm sorry, my computer just died." Which, you know, "Dog ate my homework" happened all the time [in face-to-face], and you really still, just like you do anywhere, whether it's in a brick and mortar classroom or online, you have to balance compassion with high love and high expectations.*

Interpersonal aspects of teaching. Two study participants noted that some interpersonal aspects of teaching feel the same in the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online format and in traditional classroom settings.

- *Developing those relationships [feels the same], I think. Even in a classroom setting there are still students who come to class, don't say a word, leave—so you never really have a chance to develop relationships with some students that way. As it is in online as well. But for those students who you manage to make a connection [with], that's something that works both ways in either setting, and that's my favorite part I think.*
- *The fulfilling part is still the same. You get the kids to the end, and you watch a kid that's just struggling and getting between that B and A grade, and they just do really good on the final exam that bumps them over and you get to experience that joy with them. That's where the kid that's floating right down there, that D minus, and they're just really worrying about whether they're going to graduate that year and they bump it up and make it. Those celebrations still exist and that's fun.*

As the interview excerpts demonstrated, instructors derived satisfaction from feeling connected with students. They also described the gratification they feel when students succeed.

Differences from face-to-face teaching settings. Nine of the 10 study participants observed that the online teaching environment presents some situations for instructors that do not exist in the face-to-face setting, some of which can be challenging. However, the online environment also provides some opportunities to enhance learning and connect with students that would not exist otherwise. Instructors' observations about differences from the face-to-face setting were divided among three categories:

- The ability to assess student comprehension
- Dynamics of communication with students
- The relationship of the instructor to course content

Assessing student comprehension. Face-to-face classroom settings allow instructors to monitor comprehension while students are learning. Online courses, on the other hand, require instructors to rely on other indicators. Interview excerpts below discussed the lack of real-time instructor engagement with students during stages of knowledge acquisition.

- *Sometimes that body language, if you're in the classroom, you can stop or you can maybe ask some clarifying questions to get them to think about what they're really learning. ... In this environment [online], you can't pause and you can't interject something or share something, you know, a current event that might help them understand a certain topic. ... I still get to do all those things, but it's more from what I think they should know [than] whether they are missing out on something.*
- *When I was in a [face-to-face] class for example, I would say, "OK. Here's what we're talking about today." We go through and we lecture about it. You can see the lights turn on in the eyes and understanding can take place in their face. [In my online course] I can put out an announcement and give some instruction there, or have them read the instructions, or the PowerPoint*

that's included, and never get that feedback that they're understanding that. I don't even know if they've read it.... I'm missing that part of it, that non-verbal communication a teacher gets from a classroom is the biggest thing that's missing.

- *[I miss] being able to see their faces. See if they get a concept or not. To be able to ask questions during the lecture. To see if they are processing it and can get the answer that needs to be done. Or having homework problems like assigning a problem that they all work on and they come ask me questions as they do it. You know, just that kind of connection of between what's being taught and them understanding it.*
- *It's hard when you get students who say, "I didn't understand the work this week." [Instructor:] "What part didn't you understand? Give me a specific." And then to spend 17 emails trying to get them to say, "Well, I didn't understand what to do with the negative sign." [Instructor:] "OK, we could have done that last week when you had the problem if you had just told me what your problem was." ... So you're always trying to feel out what the student is actually saying without really knowing, and that's a little disconnect.*

As the interview excerpts revealed, online teachers noted the absence of traditional methods for determining what students have understood, including interactive questioning, body language, and working through problems or examples together. Efforts to compensate for the loss of these instructional techniques, such as asynchronous email or discussion board communication, can be inefficient and time-consuming.

Dynamics of communication with students. Instructors noted ways that communication between students and teachers is different in an asynchronous online course than it is in person. The interview excerpts below demonstrate the need for instructor awareness and intentionality:

- *Instructions have to be especially clear online because the students cannot ask immediately for clarification. Without body language, you also lose a lot of communication, so an online instructor has to be careful not to come across as harsh. If you say something even a little bit harsh, [students] feel badly. Occasionally they will get angry. You have to be more careful how you say things online.*

- *An instructor has to work really hard at connecting with people online. You have to work to let your personality come through.... You have to be a little bit more—a little warmer, a little bit more enthusiastic, a little bit more of everything in order for it to filter through the online environment. Everything that we do online you have to be more deliberate about how you do it.*

The following two interview excerpts reveal that the difference between face-to-face and online student/teacher communication dynamics may contribute to improved communication in some respects.

- *I've had students come to the classroom in tears, and they just had to go out in the hallway and collect themselves and I've never known what was wrong. You know, they were never able to tell me, and they've never felt comfortable enough. But I've had students email me who were very upset or one called me recently in tears and they were able to communicate with me very well and I do wonder if it wasn't just because there was a little bit of distance there.*
- *Students online are more willing to ask for leeway, to voice their grievances, and throw you under the bus when it comes to evaluations. But at the same time, I've seen students more willing to be more self-reflective in those evaluations. And to take a little more responsibility for, you know, late assignments or whatever. Maybe that's part of that online mentality, where you can be who you want to be. Be braver than you normally would be, and I think that falls on both sides of the coin. Be braver in praising and in berating.*

These instructors observed that physical separation between instructors and students in online learning may create more trust to share personal details or thoughts. The instructor/student distance may also contribute to greater honesty in evaluation of self and others.

Relationship of the instructor to course content. Comments from instructors revealed that the fixed-content online course creates a divide between the instructor and the curriculum that would not exist otherwise.

- *Sometimes students will ask me or give me comments about a test, saying, "Wow, that was really hard," or "I studied and studied and studied and still got a D," or, you know, "Those were just trick questions and I didn't know*

what to do with it,” and they’ll get frustrated. I always tell them, you know, “The instructors don’t write the curriculum and they don’t write the assessments—the tests and the quizzes.”

- *The students don’t feel like they cannot criticize the course because they know that I didn’t develop it. I obviously don’t support them in bashing the course, but they are not afraid to say to me, “I totally don’t get this,” because they are not afraid they are going to offend me. ... When my students thought that I developed the course they would say something like, “I don’t want you to feel badly about this ...” and I could tell that they were afraid they were going to offend me by saying something about my course.*
- *If the students complain about [the course], you don’t take it personally. You’re like, “Yep, that’s the way it is.”*

The preceding study participant statements identified one way that the ready-to-teach, fixed-content format changed the relationship between instructor and content. A traditional educational setting in which the instructor controls the content could be represented as shown in Figure 4. The ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format altered the dynamic of the course in a way that can be represented as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 4. Representation of traditional relationship between instructor, course content, and student.



Figure 5. Representation of relationship between instructor, student, and course content in a fixed-content course.

As a result, students were more willing to express what they did not understand and instructor detachment from content control allowed instructors to deflect negative emotions from students.

Summary of finding 2 discussion. Participant observations revealed that similarities between face-to-face and online teaching settings included the need for students to understand course content, the need to deal with life challenges when they occur, and interpersonal aspects of teaching. Study participants also noted that differences between face-to-face and online instruction included negative and positive aspects. Challenges included the difficulty for instructors of assessing student comprehension and inefficiencies in asynchronous communication. Benefits included forthright communication between students and instructors.

Discussion of Finding 3: Formative Influences on Instructors

Multiple influences helped online adjunct instructors learn how to fulfill their role in a U UW ready-to-teach, fixed-content course. Data supporting this finding were drawn primarily from participant responses to research subquestion 3, “What influences the decisions U UW adjunct online instructors make about how to fulfill their role as an online teacher? See Table 5 for a visual representation of the data presented in this discussion.

U UW-sponsored training and inservice. Eight of the 10 research participants discussed many ways that U UW provided training and inservice for adjunct online instructors. Some aspects of training and inservice were a mandatory part of

Table 5

Finding 3 Data Frequency Chart

Name	UW hiring process/ initial training	UW formal inservice/ instruction group	UW resources for continued self- improvement	Being an online student	Previous/ other online teaching experience	Skills gained through continued practice	Online teaching courses	Personal research
Gardner	X				X	X	X	
Abbey		X	X	X		X	X	X
Frank	X			X	X			
Jack	X				X			
Ginger	X			X				
Pascal				X				
Jay	X					X		
Mary					X	X		
Sophia		X		X	X			X
Bob	X			X	X	X		
Total	6/10 (60%)	2/10 (20%)	1/10 (10%)	6/10 (60%)	6/10 (60%)	5/10 (50%)	2/10 (20%)	2/10 (20%)

employment. Other aspects were available on an as-needed basis or for elective personal enrichment. The cumulative purpose of these programs was to help instructors know how to fulfill their role and to ensure instructor competence. Instructor descriptions of UUW-sponsored training and inservice are divided into the following categories:

- Pre-hire and new-hire training
- Ongoing training and inservice
- Additional resources for instructors

Pre-hire and new-hire training. As part of the hiring process, UUW adjunct online instructors participated in online learning training. In the interview excerpts below, study participants described their experiences with this training.

- *The idea was to structure the three-week [training] course very similar to a course that you would be teaching so you start getting used to the LMS. During those three weeks, I got kind of got familiar with the tools, how to use the discussion board, how to give feedback to an assignment, how to navigate and look at the quiz, how to put grades in the gradebook, how to make an announcement. It's very structured as far as [showing you] the expectations, matching with their own learning model.*
- *The initial training I went through was basically to acclimate us to working with [the LMS] and to interact and see the interaction. Because there was a group of us going through the training at the same time, we were all students in that course. I thought that was useful.*
- *I was by no way an expert or anything, but [because of the training] at least I had experience being on the other side of it, being the student and seeing how it works. Honestly, if I wouldn't have had that I think it would have been a disaster.*
- *One main focal point of our training was the interpersonal communication with our students. That was really all we learned during the training was how to be there and have a presence, a gospel presence. Not just physical in that [students] can see you typing, but they can feel you and that they know you care.*
- *[UUW] put you through some rigor to understand the [LMS] environment. And if you didn't understand it, you at least knew who to talk to to help you*

get through it until it became more of a habit. They didn't just throw you in a pool, give you a password, and say, "Go at it." They tried to help you be successful.

As participant comments reveal, the focus of the training was not only to help instructors know the technical aspects of fulfilling their responsibilities, but also to understand how UUW anticipated adjunct online instructors would communicate with students and actively set the tone for their courses.

Ongoing training and inservice. Online adjunct instructors belong to an instructional group with a leader. The group leader (IGL) performs periodic checks on courses, receives weekly reports from instructors, and structures twice-monthly meetings, one synchronous and one asynchronous, for members of the instructional group. The IGL sets the agenda for these meetings, which are typically used to discuss business items and for instructor inservice. Excerpts from instructor interviews describe UUW's support structure for continued instructor training.

- *When I first started, I tried not to place a lot of expectations but just be open-minded, absorb, do, that sort of thing. And there's a ton of support at UUW for that. The kind of things that they have in place with their IGL's and course visits and all this stuff. And as a brand-new instructor, that was amazing.*
- *We have a communications teaching group. We meet once a month synchronously.... I actually like being connected with the community.... I'm [also] connected with my online communications group, which is about, I think it's 16 of us all together. Some of them are on-campus people. And then I'm connected with the big online community of UUW. You can get any information you want.*

These comments demonstrated that a support structure contributes to continuing instructor success. Experienced instructors remain in instructional groups but can also join with other support networks for continued training.

Additional resources for instructors. An interview excerpt from one highly

motivated research participant revealed extensive use of resources that U UW provided for online instructors who wished to develop their knowledge and skills.

- *I have really utilized [U UW's online teaching and learning support]. They're always posting [things] specific to our platform [LMS] and sometimes it's just more specific to online teaching in general. Like, "What's the best way to facilitate a discussion board?" ... Last semester I started a forum about interventions for struggling students because I had read some research on it and I had tried some things and felt it was really valuable. So I started a forum on it and we had a great discussion with the whole community.... We have online conferences too. Every June there's an online teaching conference and it's streamed but you can also go to it.... They're really good at U UW about teaching us things. If I have a question, if I don't understand how something works, they'll give me personal attention. I can call them and get personal instruction on it.*

This participant related that she has developed as an online instructor because U UW posts research for instructors related to online teaching and learning, facilitates discussion forums related to teaching topics, hosts a yearly conference for online instructors, and offers personal help if instructors request it.

Perspectives gained from being an online student. Six study participants indicated that having been a student in online programs has influenced the way they approach online teaching. The following interview excerpts provide a glimpse into what study participants learned because of being an online student first.

- *I completed graduate school in a hybrid program. Hybrid was a good option.... It also taught me how to facilitate online. I had a course in graduate school, taught by a wonderful professor, about online education. We developed our own online courses and ran them.*
- *For my own degrees, I had to take an online course. [I saw] what worked as a student, what I enjoyed doing. There's really not great training on how to be an online instructor.... Hopefully you've had an online class so you know what you're in for.*
- *From experiencing it on the student end I gained a lot of perspective of what*

might be better from the instructor.... I think the real way to be prepared for [teaching an online class] is to participate in one.

- *In the online courses I've taken in the past, I was not a fan.... But because I had that experience, I can relate and empathize with my students who are now saying, "I've never done this before. I don't know how it's going to work." I get it and I tell them that. I'm really forthright with them and say, "You know, I get it. I wasn't a fan at first either."*
- *I did my MBA program half online, half on-ground.... You could see which instructors had a presence and really cared, and which ones were just like, "I let the course run."*

Participant comments revealed that experiences as an online student were an effective way to learn how to handle the challenges of the online instructional setting. Experiences as a student also provided realistic expectations of the online instructional setting.

Knowledge gained from other online teaching experience. Six of the 10 study participants taught online for other schools prior to or concurrently with their work for U UW. The following interview excerpts reveal that professional knowledge from previous or other experiences influenced their approach to U UW courses.

- *Every class that I've taught has been fixed-content, ready-to-teach.... So as long as you're tech-savvy and can understand how those programs work, you can wrap your mind around the process of navigating through an online course and how to communicate with your students.... Once I got the hang of the rules for each school [my courses] have been at, it's been a fairly easy process.*
- *I had taught one or two [face-to-face] classes at another institution.... [After starting to teach online], I got the same conversations and could answer the same questions, share some of my experiences that aligned with the readings, just like you were in the classroom. I mean, you were still communicating with the students and they were still asking questions. So then, kind of over time, as I did this for a while, I realized, "Online is way better than the classroom," because I could do it when it was convenient for me versus a certain block that I had to go do it at the university.*

Learning through continued personal experience. Five research participants

discussed how knowledge gained through continued personal experience helped them know how to better fulfill the instructor role in their courses, as illustrated in the following interview excerpts.

- *[My knowledge has] evolved over these years, where I can anticipate so much of this. It's not like I went and—I've taken courses, by the way, on online teaching—but it's not like I've learned all of this in some three-week class in online teaching. It's something that I have [gained], just from observing and from trying something and seeing how it worked and then getting feedback on it, and I'm still doing that today.*
- *Each semester I've tried to get a little bit better about proactively saying, "Guys. This is going to be hard. Get on top of it. You know, please do this!" And beginning the semester I email all the students with the course schedule and try to explain things.*
- *I think I learned just how to respond to their questions, mainly.... And learning how to teach the concepts, what I can show or teach them that will help them. Not just how to do one problem, but kind of the concept of it all. And how to have the tool available that can help them.*
- *I think that way back in the beginning I probably wasn't as clear in my expectations or my communications with students. Over time, I've realized that I need to say things more clearly, more simply, more direct and to the point. And now with UUW expanding so much all over the world, I have a lot of students whose first language isn't English. So I try not to use slang. I try to be very, very succinct and stick to the point, and then just stop.*

Instructor statements revealed that continued experience has helped them know how to anticipate student needs, how to develop practical skills, and how to communicate more effectively.

Summary of finding 3 discussion. Study participants revealed that several formative influences contributed to their development as online instructors for UUW. In addition to formal training and other resources provided by UUW, participants gained perspectives from being an online student previously, from other online instructional employment, and from experience gained from continued practice in their online course.

Discussion of Finding 4: Instructors' Personal Influence on Courses

Instructors used non-prescribed aspects of ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses to fulfill their role in individualized ways. The primary source of data for this finding was subquestion 3, “What influences the decisions UUW adjunct online instructors make about how to fulfill their role as an online teacher?” See Table 6 for a visual representation of the data presented in this discussion.

How instructors view their role. All 10 research participants discussed their personal view of their role in a UUW, ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. Many described themselves as facilitators. Study participant comments revealed that the term *facilitator* has many shades of meaning.

- *I see myself as major facilitator. I like to utilize the Socratic method of questioning. A lot of it is non-directive. I'll just ask a question, you know. "What about this? Tell me what you think about this." "Is there an alternative explanation for this?"*
- *I say at the beginning of the semester, "This is the content that the department has put together for this course. I facilitate the course and I am here to guide you, to direct you, to help you through this content. That is my purpose." So it puts me in the role of a tutor.*
- *I kind of view it more like facilitating a reading circle rather than writing the book yourself. ... You know, I try to open the door, "Please come talk to me if you have any questions or concerns," but if they don't then it's more of me being kind of like their cheerleader, their supporter, or their facilitator. "I'm here to help you through this content," you know, kind of like the coach of a game.*
- *[I'm] more of a facilitator, I guess. A guide more than directly teaching like you would think of it in the classroom. I feel like it's my job to know the material really well and to anticipate the problems that students might have. When I do my screencasts, going over the objectives for the week and touching on each of those, I like to try to anticipate what their problems might be. Things that they might have a problem with that they might not understand just by reading the textbook.*

Table 6

Finding 4 Data Frequency Chart

Name	Personal view of role	Announcements	Discussions	Screenscasts/ video	Email	Telephone	Audio recordings
Gardner	X	X	X		X		
Abbey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Frank	X	X	X		X		
Jack	X	X	X		X		
Ginger	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pascal	X	X	X		X	X	
Jay	X	X	X	X	X		
Mary	X	X	X	X	X		
Sophia	X	X	X		X		
Bob	X	X	X		X		
Total	10/10 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	4/10 (40%)	10/10 (100%)	3/10 (30%)	1/10 (10%)

- *I'm teaching just an entry-level macroeconomics class—so I'm a facilitator to help them. I want to help them understand the book. If I've had experience in the principles that are being taught, or the objectives being taught, I want them to understand from a practitioner's point of view why it's important or how it's going to fit in the future classes.*

The preceding interview excerpts demonstrate that instructors' views of facilitation include spurring thought, tutoring, coaching, being a content expert, or providing real-life perspectives with principles being taught.

In addition to facilitating, other study participants saw themselves as creators of the course learning environment, encouragers, and motivators.

- *I'm a gardener. I try to take the rocks out of the soil, I prepare the soil, I wait for the seeds, the students, to be put into the ground. I've created an environment where they can grow but every seed is going to grow at a different rate and a different time. But it's my responsibility, regardless of how long it takes for that seed to sprout, it's my responsibility to make sure it has the right environment to do so. So whatever that is, I try to do it.*
- *I went in completely prepared to make these students feel welcome, to feel faith in themselves, to feel like the Lord wanted them to succeed and He'd be there for them, and to have just a love of the subject because obviously with this subject, there are a lot of divinely inspired things in our curriculum.... I'm inspiring. I'm giving insight. I'm motivating. I'm comforting. I'm strengthening. I'm loving. I'm understanding.*
- *One [of my roles] is cheerleader. So many students either at the beginning of the semester—"I'm stressed about this!"—or after the first exam—"I can't believe this score!"... And [there are] students who are repeating [the course]. ... I invite them to reach out to me every couple of weeks just to touch base so I can make sure they're staying on task so that they can pass. All of that I feel is cheerleading, motivational, "Hey, it's okay. You know, you're not the only one in this situation. Keep doing it. Just do all the assignments." That sort of thing.*
- *I think [one] role that I do have is being a cheerleader and building up their self-esteem. Spending a lot of time saying, "You CAN do this. Stick with this." I take that role of being a mentor to the students and helping them with their college experience, or what they want to be, or even just the details of the class, I take that very seriously.*

All preceding quotations demonstrate that instructors see their role in a UUW ready-to-teach, fixed-content course as being strongly interpersonal with a focus on trying to help students have the best learning experience possible.

Actions instructors take to fulfill their role. To fulfill their role in the fixed-content course, UUW adjunct online instructors make use of course elements that allow for personal communication and expression. All 10 study participants described such tools and their personal methods for employing them. Instructor comments are divided into the following categories.

- Class announcements
- Class discussions
- Personal emails
- Telephone calls

Class announcements. All 10 instructors discussed how they communicate with their class through the announcements board. Interview excerpts listed below demonstrate individual approaches with regard to announcements.

- *I discuss upcoming assignments, addressing problems that I have seen students have with the assignments in the past. I also include ideas, links, embed videos, text supplements, some spiritual content, something humorous. I try to keep everything concise.*
- *I often attach example papers so that [students] don't feel overwhelmed with the assignment instructions. I also make screencasts about how to accomplish some of the course tasks.*
- *I put something on my announcements at least once a week, sometimes two or three times a week, where I bring in an enriching resource of some sort to enhance their learning. Maybe it's a different video or maybe it's a current event challenge. Something I want them to do or think about.*
- *For each chapter, I pick problems that are similar in concept to what they are going to be tested on, what their homework assignments will be, and then I create a video walking through the problem, showing them how to solve it.*

And I post those videos for the students, to me that's the best way I can teach.

- *I point out specific things that I want them to pay attention to because there is so much [content] there [in the course].... I try to draw down to the, I guess what in business you would call the MVP, the minimum viable product, but in this case the minimum viable learning that a student should get out of this particular week.*
- *I like to give a little overview through the announcement board that we do. I always point out, "This is the place that students miss most."*
- *In my review, I'll post an example of excellent student work. I'll email them and say, "Do you care if I highlight your assignment this week?" And I'll post the one that we just finished. I think it also encourages the students that aren't performing very well.*

In writing the announcements, all instructors included some basic elements in text, such as instructions and reminders. Some instructors also posted asynchronous webcam videos of themselves speaking, screencast videos, audio recordings, links, or other supplemental materials. Announcements were also used to provide warnings about difficult content or concepts, validation for excellent student work, and guidance for students to improve.

Class discussions. UUW's online courses incorporate discussion boards, in which students reply to questions or post their own. All 10 study participants relied upon discussion boards as a method for personalizing their instruction of the course, as demonstrated in the following interview excerpts.

- *I have a number of articles that I'll post. Usually short articles, and I'll say, "Read this and tell me what you think."*
- *[In discussions] I'll challenge what [texts] say if I have a personal experience knowing in the business world knowing how it worked. As a little bit of critical thinking, I've told [students], "Let's challenge what they've said because here are some possibilities."*
- *On the questions and conversations thread of the discussion board, which is kind of just a more general link, everybody can say whatever they want, like, "Hey, I read a good book today," or "I had good ice cream today," you*

know, whatever they want to say. I post on that quite often about current events or news stories that I've heard. I'll say, "I've just heard about this today and these are my thoughts," or "I just finished the most amazing book. I recommend it highly." I try to keep an open dialogue going the whole semester.

Study participant statements revealed that discussion boards can be a method for expanding student knowledge or for encouraging critical thinking. Discussions can also be a tool to introduce a social element to the course and encourage communication between students and the instructor.

Personal emails. All 10 instructors relied upon personal emails for contact with individual students, as demonstrated in the following statement excerpts.

- *If [a student] is not showing up or if you don't see that they were active in the class, you can send them an email and try to encourage them.... A lot of the time, there's a personal problem or a work problem.*
- *If [a student] has something that they don't want to ask on the discussion board, then they'll email me directly. Or if I notice that a student is falling behind, I email them directly.*
- *You have students that are constantly needing encouragement, especially those students who have come through the Directions program.... You spend a lot of time with that. The use of email is pretty extensive.*
- *I offer the Adobe Connect option [to meet with me, or as an alternative] I say, "You know, you can meet with me in Zoom," I give them my phone number, and also my email address. [Among all of these options,] about 98% of my correspondence is all done through email.*

Participant comments demonstrate that email is a primary method for person-to-person contact, particularly when dealing with individual situations or when the nature of the communication needs to be personal.

Telephone calls. Although UUW adjunct online instructors are not required to make telephone calls to students as part of their work responsibilities, study data revealed

that some instructors used the telephone to make personal contact. Those who made calls observed that the effort to speak personally with students yielded meaningful results, as demonstrated in the following interview excerpts.

- *I try to enhance connectedness with my students. At the beginning of each semester I call my students and explain that I am their online instructor and ask them if they have any questions. Talking to them makes a big difference.... Calling increases my workload a little, but it helps the students not to be afraid to email or call me.*
- *I do a lot of phone calls to students. Especially those that are not engaged enough. It's amazing how quick a phone call will get them to motivate again. Even if they're older, it's like, "Oh, you really would call me at home?" It kind of shocks them. That personal touch is still really important and it needs to be there.*
- *I've Face-Timed my students in the past too, who had some real needs. With one gal, we both sat and cried as we were talking.*

Instructor remarks illustrated that a synchronous, personal contact between instructor and student can remove personal barriers, provide motivation, and give extra support when needed.

Summary of finding 4 discussion. Data revealed that instructors see themselves as having a highly interpersonal role in a UOW ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. Instructors described themselves as facilitators and motivators. They relied upon course elements that allowed for personal expression, including announcements and discussions, and personal communication tools, such as email or telephone, to help them fulfill their role in a personally meaningful way.

Discussion of Finding 5: Professional and Personal Instructor Motivation

Commitment to online education, love of teaching, and fulfillment of personal

needs motivated adjunct online instructors to continue in their employment with UUW.

The primary source of data for this finding was research subquestion 3, “What influences the decisions UUW adjunct online instructors make about how to fulfill their role as an online teacher?” All other research questions were secondary sources of data for this finding. See Table 7 for a visual representation of the data presented in this discussion.

Commitment to online education. All 10 study participants displayed a strong commitment to online education. Some reasons for this commitment were rooted in characteristics of online learning in general, while other reasons were specific to UUW’s online education efforts. Study participant comments are divided into the following categories:

- Capabilities within online education to improve student learning
- Increasing the availability of education
- Esteem for UUW’s online program structure and mission

Capabilities within online education to improve student learning. Study participants recognized that the online learning format can provide benefits to help students learn. A sampling of excerpts from participant interviews is provided below.

- *I continue working as an online instructor because I value online learning. I discovered that I learned how to learn for the first time in my life because of online education. Online learning makes you seek your own learning. It is like learning how to learn. I thought it was incredible! Everybody needs to learn how to learn for themselves. So when I facilitate courses I emphasize that aspect of online learning.*
- *As far as the built platform [LMS], I really like the instant feedback you can get, as far as they get the grades done, they’ve got their scores. [I really like] the ability to go back and look at material, especially the new material where they can pause it, they can review it, they can slow it down if they need to. There’s a lot going on technology-wise that’s really good.*

Table 7

Finding 5 Data Frequency Chart

Name	Commitment to online education			Love of teaching		Fulfillment of personal needs		
	Capabilities to improve student learning	Making education available	Esteem for UUW's online program structure and mission	Love of subject	Love of students and their development	Schedule and location flexibility	Provides good employment	Individual and professional development
Gardner		X		X	X	X	X	
Abbey	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Frank	X	X			X	X	X	X
Jack		X		X	X	X		X
Ginger		X		X	X		X	
Pascal			X		X			
Jay		X		X	X	X	X	
Mary	X	X		X	X		X	
Sophia	X		X		X	X	X	X
Bob		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	4/10 (40%)	8/10 (80%)	4/10 (40%)	7/10 (70%)	10/10 (100%)	7/10 (70%)	8/10 (80%)	5/10 (50%)

- *I like the convenience that students have, not having to be at the campus. I have lot of students who are not even in the state, let alone the country. I've had sections where I've had 13 time zones learning at the same time.*
- *When I look at some of the research it will say, "We're comparing a traditional with an online." I think we're past that stage.... For example, a video is something I could use to teach you a very simple procedure that you can pause, rewind, slow it down, insert closed caption in, start analyzing this procedure. And that's more effective than if I was on a white board showing you how to do this.... If you think about where online is today versus 20 years ago, I guess even five years ago, we are making improvements. We are making it a better learning environment and making it better quality.*

These comments illustrate that instructors have recognized capabilities within online education to promote deeper learning, to provide prompt feedback, and to establish a learning environment that does not depend upon individuals being in the same place at the same time.

Increasing the availability of education. A few interview excerpts demonstrated study participant views about how online instruction expands the reach of education.

- *I feel like [teaching online] is extremely important. I feel like I have a very important job. There are a lot of people who want to continue their education and because of where they live or their life circumstance—they might have disability. They might have small children. They might work odd hours. You know, they might be across the world where these things aren't available to them. I just feel like it's very, very important for me and other people who do what I do help to provide this education to these people. I would never do it any other way at this point just because I feel like what we do is so important.*
- *Online's going to be here forever, in my opinion, just because of our society.... Everyone's working, has families, and everyone has their own lives. And because of that the online is one of those opportunities that allows them to still continue with their education. So while there are benefits to face-to-face and there's benefits to online, in my opinion, with technology increasing the way it has, those disadvantages are decreasing dramatically and the advantages are increasing.*
- *I have students right now from Ghana, from Seoul, Korea, from South Africa, from Guyana, I mean, and all over the United States, Hawaii, and so I understand why these students are taking these courses online. Some of them*

don't have a choice. Therefore, I have become converted to the necessity of online instructing. That has been a process for me, to come to that point.... A year ago, I would have been like, "Oh come on, just get your body on a campus." Well, for a lot of students if that was all there was for them, they would not be getting a degree. It wouldn't happen. And I understand that now.

- *So much of my career has been international and I saw students from other countries come to the United States. Most of them that I know well did their bachelor's in the country where they live and came to the United States, got some type of master's, went back to their country, and their employment opportunities were unreal. They have all flourished in amazing ways.... It will be interesting to see if the online degree, without ever leaving your country, but your English is good enough to do the online degree, are [these students] going to get the same opportunities as those who came here to get the face-to-face environment, the face-to-face experience? In my heart, I believe that they will, that the majority of them will find great jobs.*

The preceding comments revealed that study participants felt strongly about the importance of online learning for those whose life circumstances prevent them from attending traditional face-to-face classes. U UW adjunct online instructors in the current study believed in the power of education to transform lives and that online instruction is a tool to make learning opportunities available to more people than have had them in the past.

Esteem for U UW's online program structure and mission. Four participants expressed that motivation to be an online adjunct instructor for U UW was a result of their approval for either how or why U UW has developed its online learning programs. A sampling of comments is provided below.

- *[U UW's online program] is a very different atmosphere. It's so supportive and it's so kind and caring. And, "Yes, these are expectations. This is the level you have to complete. You do have to teach this material as it has been given to you. You do need to support the decisions the instructional designers have made. But how can we help you do that the best?" So it's a nice place to work, and it offers a lot for me and for my family.*
- *[To enroll at U UW, students] still have to have a GED or high school*

diploma, but everybody and everyone is there [among UUW online students] from the low-end performers to the high-end performers. And I think that's what UUW's format of opening the doors, Directions program and all that, is creating. Honestly, I enjoy the challenge of being in an educational space where you have that imbalance, I guess you could say.... I just feel drawn to it because I feel like I understand it. I feel like I can do some good in it.

- *When UUW started [their online program], it was, "This is going to be something amazing." They believed that from the start. It was expressed in no uncertain terms as, "You are going to make things better." ... There's a bigger vision for the teaching, for what education is going to do for these students. And I feel that. I feel that very strongly.*

Comments demonstrated that UUW's helpful professional environment for adjunct online instructors has created a pleasant work situation and that UUW's online outreach provides a compelling reason to be an online instructor.

Love of teaching. All study participants expressed how love of teaching provided motivation to be an adjunct online instructor for UUW. In the data collection process, love of teaching as expressed by study participants was complex and multi-dimensional. Consequently, study participant comments are divided into the following categories:

- Love of students and their development
- Love for the subject matter being taught

Love of students and their development. The following sample of interview excerpts demonstrates the depth of feeling study participants had for students and their progress.

- *I enjoy teaching [but] I am currently not in a teaching [job professionally]. [Teaching online for UUW] allows me to still feel like I'm still part of [education] even if it is not necessarily choosing the content.... I'm still working with students. I still get those emails from them that say, "Hey, thank you so much. I've never thought about it this way. Your comments made this just click." And that's the same feeling and excitement that I get when I'm in the classroom and I finish explaining a formula and that student in the back who's been struggling says, "I understand it now!" It's like, "Yes! Success!*

You got this!”

- *I was very surprised the first semester to just be heart-to-heart in love with these folks within, like, two weeks. I wondered, “How does this happen?” ... These folks are magnificent. Some of them have come a long way to get here and they’re working so hard. And they want this so badly. And they are growing so much. I mean, you can just see it from one week to the next. And when they express their true emotions sometimes I get emotional reading them.*
- *[Students] can go right to YouTube and learn everything they need to know about any topic they want. But they choose to learn with a professor or a teacher, and that’s because they want to know that someone cares for them. ... I really enjoy watching students become more. That’s what I live for when I teach. I don’t care what the student level is, but watching them become more, that’s [my greatest motivation to teach]. Number one.*
- *My personal teaching philosophy is based on the belief that every student deserves a customized, personalized experience in school, but without teaching 50 different courses to 50 students or 30 different courses to 30 students in a class. That is the only approach that I think works to give each student the opportunity to grow how they need to grow.... I love the zing of seeing lightbulbs, in this case virtual lightbulbs, seeing those students self-actualize to an extent, at least from one level to the next.*

Love of subject. In the sample of interview excerpts below, study participants described how love of the subject matter they teach motivates them to continue being an adjunct online instructor.

- *I enjoy seeing students grasp these concepts. Especially the subject matter that I’m teaching. I think that every university student, every college student, should have this course.... I have kind of a passion for [other courses I’ve taught], but not nearly as much as I have for the subject matter that I’m teaching right now.*
- *In my introduction to the class [I try] to help them see how many different options and alternatives there are with accounting. Because, I mean before I had kids, I worked full-time. While I had kids, I had my own little consulting business.... And then, once I needed to get back into the workplace, I could again use it full-time. So I just try to show them how much I love it and how there’s no one-size-fits-all for it.*
- *I really enjoy when there are students from all over giving their perspectives*

[about my subject]. When I hear one student who grew up in or near the bay area in California [describe] what their idea of a big business is, versus a guy in a third-world country who talks about monetizing sanitation as a big business idea, I'm like, "This is just so eye-opening and enriching to me that this guy has this technology and software idea, and this guy is just trying to make life livable for people." And their perspectives just bring so much benefit to the classroom.

Fulfillment of personal needs. Nine of 10 study participants identified ways that being an adjunct online instructor for UUW fulfilled personal needs. Participant statements included practical reasons, such as needing employment, in addition to factors related to personal growth. Comments will be discussed in two categories:

- Good employment with schedule and location flexibility
- Individual and professional development

Good employment with schedule and location flexibility. Interview excerpts listed below illustrate practical reasons that motivated study participants to be adjunct online instructors for UUW.

- *It's really flexible, it's in my field of choice, and it has a nice little paycheck. It adds a little supplemental income in a way that is very manageable for me. I'm a single mom, with two little girls, and it's really just me taking care of them. I can do this late at night, or on my lunchbreak. So that's been really great, and that's kind of helped with some of that motivation, is that I know it's helping take care of my family.*
- *I work, go to my doctorate classes, and then I do [my online course from] 8–10 [p.m.] That's when I'm working on grading, doing feedback, that's the time I've set aside, and so that's also my office hours.... I'm sitting here in a different city [than UUW] completely and there's no way I'd be doing this job if UUW said, "You have to come in on Thursday night at 6 p.m. to teach this class."*
- *Teaching online through UUW is perfect for me because obviously, I don't live up there [near UUW campus], and I don't have a Ph.D. so becoming a full-time teacher at a university isn't an option and I like my job. But yet, I still want to have the opportunity to teach and help students and earn a little bit extra money.*

Individual and professional development. Comments from study participants

indicated that teaching online has proved to be valuable for personal or other professional pursuits.

- *UW helps fill my need to keep my spirituality in check and to not only just look up secular and math stuff but also look up what's in the scriptures, and for me personally, that's a good reminder. That's a piece of my life that is often pushed aside for last. And so I like that that is at least integrated into one portion of my professional life.*
- *I think everybody [teaches online] for different purposes. I want to do this in retirement. I see myself, until somebody says, "You can't, you're too old,"—and I've met a few people who were too old—but until somebody says, "You're too old, you're not a good instructor anymore," my plan is to be an online instructor until I die. There's some personal satisfaction in teaching.*
- *I think it has probably helped my career. I just think staying in touch with the topic that relates to what I do and to see the changes in research from the books, I think it makes me a better employee, a full-time employee in the profession where I'm at.*
- *I personally like having perspectives of another school because I learn things from them that I wouldn't learn here [at my college], and vice versa.... The more you can glean from different schools, you get a better picture of higher education and where it's going. You get those diverse ideas and say, "Not that. That has been tried and it's not working, but oooh, maybe that, though." So for me, online teaching is just part of being a holistic, modern professor.*
- *The class that I teach is a business class. So all the projects they work on, every semester I teach it with every student, I watch them go through that process and it forces me to continually revisit those same principles with my own business and with the clients that I work with. It keeps those things fresh.... It has benefitted me personally to be able to teach the class. And then I'm able to bring that experience back into the classroom, and it just kind of builds and perpetuates that way.... I really get a kick out of watching the students use the material for the first time, and how much every time I use the material it changes the way I do things.*

Although the comments listed above represent individual perspectives, they illustrate that being an adjunct online instructor for UW contributes to individual development for instructors in many aspects of life.

Summary of finding 5 discussion. Study participants derived motivation to be an adjunct online instructor for UUW from a combination of professional and personal reasons. All instructors were committed to the importance of online education. Furthermore, in addition to providing good employment, being an adjunct online instructor for UUW contributed to individual growth.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented five findings that emerged from this study. Findings were organized according to the research questions. Data from interviews with study participants, follow-up conversations, observations, and electronic communication provided a description of what UUW adjunct online instructors experience when using ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses. Extensive quotations from study participants were included in this report of the findings due to the nature of qualitative research. By employing study participants' own words, the researcher intended to increase reader confidence in the findings. Participants' descriptions accurately represented the phenomenon that was studied.

The first finding in this study was that many factors influenced instructors' positive and negative perceptions of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format. Eight of 10 study participants shared positive perceptions of the fixed-content course format, including consistency of student experience, reducing instructor workload to have a course prepared for use, and perceived benefits for the university to ensure course quality. Nine of 10 study participants share negative perceptions of the ready-to-

teach, fixed-content course format, including challenges created by limitations imposed upon instructors and inability to implement personal preferences regarding course content and design.

The second finding in this study was that the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course format has created an instructional environment that simultaneously connects with and diverges from instructors' previous face-to-face teaching experiences. Five of 10 study participants contributed observations about similarities to previous face-to-face teaching experiences. Their comments were related to student mastery of course content, students' personal challenges, and interpersonal aspects of teaching. Nine of 10 study participants commented about differences from the face-to-face setting. Their observations related to the ability to assess student comprehension, dynamics of communication with students, and the relationship of the instructor to course content.

The third finding in this study was that multiple influences helped online adjunct instructors learn how to fulfill their role in a UYW ready-to-teach, fixed-content course. All 10 study participants discussed various sources of knowledge that guided their practice, including UYW-sponsored training and inservice, experiences being an online student, previous or other online teaching experience, skills gained through continued practice, online teaching courses, and personal research.

The fourth finding in this study was that instructors used nonprescribed aspects of ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses to fulfill their role in individualized ways. All 10 research participants described their role in the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course as that of a facilitator. Tools that participants relied upon to assist them in their facilitation

efforts included class announcements, class discussions, screencasts or asynchronous webcam video, email, telephone, and audio recordings.

The fifth finding of this study was that commitment to online education, love of teaching, and fulfillment of personal needs motivated adjunct online instructors to continue in their employment with U UW. All 10 study participants discussed ways they believe in the capabilities of online education. All 10 study participants spoke of love of teaching as motivation to teach online for U UW. Nine of 10 study participants identified ways that teaching online for U UW fulfills personal or professional needs.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this multiple case qualitative study was to explore with 10 adjunct online instructors for UUW what they experience within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. The study aspired to provide a better understanding of what it means to be an instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course. The study also contributed to the body of knowledge concerning the capabilities and limitations of this form of online distance education.

To accomplish these purposes, the researcher collected qualitative data from research participants by conducting in-depth interviews and collecting supporting data through observations, email, and follow-up conversations. Study participants included 10 current instructors in ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses for UUW. The previous chapter presented the context of the study, including a description of the UUW online program and an introduction to the study participants, and key findings from study data. This chapter will discuss ways that study findings connect with theory and other research. This discussion is followed by recommendations for practice and further research.

Comparison of Findings with Theory and Research

This Study in Context of Current Instructional Unbundling Trends

As was presented in the literature review, unbundling is a practice affecting higher education in which instructional duties that have traditionally been managed and

carried out by a single individual are now being differentiated into separate activities performed by various educational professionals (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015). The practice of online instructional unbundling in higher education created the setting for this study: on-campus instructional leaders and professionals at U UW developed a structure for online courses that was scalable for rapid growth and allowed U UW to maintain accreditation, and adjunct online instructors were hired to facilitate the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses. This study has provided a view into the effects of unbundling from the perspective of online instructors, whose traditional teaching role has been altered because of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course structure.

Master course concept. U UW's ready-to-teach, fixed-content course model is one form of the master course concept (Hill, 2012), an illustration of instructional unbundling. After the master course content is created by instructional designers and subject matter experts, the sponsoring institution, as opposed to an individual professor or instructor, retains ownership of course materials. The course is subsequently replicated into several sections for use by full- and part-time faculty.

Key players in the for-profit online education sector have adopted the master course model, the largest example of which is the University of Phoenix (www.phoenix.edu). Although some University of Phoenix faculty are full-time, most instructors are adjuncts hired on a contingent basis (Pepicello, 2012). Other well-known examples of for-profit online institutions that employ the master course model are Kaplan University (www.kaplanuniversity.edu) and DeVry University (www.devry.edu).

Even though U UW relies upon the master course format for its online program,

UUW has less in common with the previously mentioned for-profit institutions than it does with other traditional universities that have expanded their reach by offering master course online programs. Grand Canyon University, a private Christian institution, has its main campus in Phoenix, Arizona. In 2016, approximately 15,000 students attended classes on campus and nearly 60,000 students were enrolled online (Abraham, 2016). Southern New Hampshire University, a private, nonprofit institution based in Manchester, New Hampshire, has more than 3,000 on-campus students and over 80,000 online students (www.snhu.edu/about-us).

Affiliation with an established, purpose-driven university was important to participants in this study. Although many study participants acknowledged their appreciation of the additional income earned through their employment with UUW, their motivations were also related to belief in the mission and values of UUW and belief in the power of UUW's online outreach to provide educational opportunities to many who are unable to attend UUW classes on-campus. Such motivations provide valuable context for many of the key study findings.

The effects of unbundling in the literature. Gehrke and Kezar (2015) noted that unbundling is occurring in higher education but that its effects remain unclear. This is due to the various perspectives from which researchers have approached the topic. Those who are in favor of unbundling have described how it decreases costs and provides educational opportunities for more students (Jewett, 2000; Paulson, 2002). Those who are opposed to instructional unbundling have expressed concern about the reduced level of skill required of faculty and potential impact on students (Leisyte & Dee, 2012; Slaughter

& Rhoades, 2004).

Gehrke and Kezar (2015) observed that the scarcity of research concerning potential advantages and drawbacks to unbundling has led to a polarized dialogue.

The current dialogue about unbundling typically presents it as a wholesale good—which will help to contain costs, to capitalize on different individuals’ expertise, and increase access—or a wholesale bad—that loses key expertise, deprofessionalizes faculty and robs students of holistic learning and fragments their development. (p. 95)

In an effort to reach beyond the “all good—all bad” polemic, the purpose of this study has been to neither validate nor repudiate U UW’s choice to unbundle tasks related to online instruction. The researcher’s primary interest was to study the experience of online instructors as they functioned in their unbundled instructional role and to perceive the practice from their perspective.

Positive and negative perceptions of unbundling in this study. All findings viewed holistically demonstrated that instructors participating in this study identified aspects of their experience teaching a fixed-content course that they liked and that they disliked. This demonstrated the value of the multiple case study approach because each instructor provided unique perspectives on the unbundling phenomenon. Unlike the polarized dialogue Gehrke and Kezar (2015) noted in the literature, the experience of actual practitioners was multidimensional and nuanced. In this study, some of the advantages postulated in the literature were demonstrated and some of the disadvantages theorized in the literature were also evident. After studying and analyzing the data, the researcher’s view is that the greatest benefit in the understanding of unbundling of online education moving forward will come from further development of its positive outcomes

and careful attention to its negative aspects.

Costs of unbundling for the institution. The literature has discussed how unbundling can reduce overall financial costs for an educational institution by streamlining course production and allowing for course re-use (Jewett, 2000; Twigg, 2003). Even so, prior to long-term fiscal benefits, if a school or university such as UUW plans to implement an unbundled online program, its financial costs will increase initially. The data in this study show that UUW has created a sizeable infrastructure to manage its online programs, from which a large investment of time, effort, and financial resources can be inferred. However, the researcher has no data available that demonstrates any of the long-term cost savings to the university predicted by Twigg and Jewett.

Costs of unbundling for instructors. As opposed to a financial cost, for online adjunct instructors, the data for this study revealed an emotional cost. As has been previously discussed in terms of adult learning (Knowles, 1980), instructors gave up aspects of self-direction and set aside personal experience to facilitate content that had been prepared by someone else. The cost for some study participants with regard to these aspects was higher than it was for others.

Costs of unbundling for students. Costs to students in terms of instructional quality resulting from unbundling have not been widely researched in the literature. Furthermore, literature demonstrating the benefits of unbundled instruction to students, such as superior quality online courses, has not been extensively shared because it has often been done internally at innovative educational institutions (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015).

However, in an ideal implementation of unbundling, students would not experience any cost related to the unbundling happening behind the scenes. The partnership between school and instructor would bring about the same result as if a single individual were producing and managing the course.

The researcher noted that U UW has invested considerable thought and energy into creating a structure that keeps online adjunct instructors connected with the school and with each other. Data from this study indicated that when the partnership between the school and the instructor breaks down on any level, the result is a cost to the student in terms of reduced quality of instruction.

Fixed-Content Course Impact on Instructors

Experienced instructors typically appreciate the freedom to structure a class according to their personal instructional style or in a way that they feel helps students learn the content best (Hara, 2010; Nelson, 2003), but as this study has demonstrated, ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses remove from instructors many traditional levels of self-direction and do not allow instructors to exercise their full range of knowledge related to course content. Consequently, restrictions on teacher agency in the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format may conflict with the first two principles of andragogy. These principles relate to adults being self-directing and having a “reservoir of experience” which is a “rich resource for learning” (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007, p. 84.)

Possible results from restrictions on adult learners. One impact of restrictions on some instructors in this study was disengagement. As part of finding 1, Abbey

described how the fixed-content course format and loss of autonomy had led her to disengage in some ways from her instruction. She related how her interest in the subject matter remained higher when she had greater input into the content. She also noted that when she taught courses in which she could adjust the assignments, she continually sought ideas for course improvement. Because of the fixed-content format, Abbey focused primarily on her course facilitation. Another study participant, Ginger, recognized that if her course remained the same semester after semester, she might be prone to disengagement or even burnout.

Concerns expressed by Abbey and Ginger reflect aspects of a theoretical framework developed by Maslach and Leiter (1997; as cited in McCann & Holt, 2009) in a study of online teacher burnout. The framework included (1) workload; (2) lack of control over daily activities; (3) lack of reward for performance; (4) feelings associated with relationships being damaged or undermined; (5) feelings that result from the absence of respect, fairness, or openness; and (6) feelings arising from missions or core values conflicting with decisions made by management. Lack of control over daily activities in the fixed-content course and conflict between the fixed-content course and the instructors' personal views of what should be taught figured prominently in Abbey's and Ginger's study data.

Learning as a result of disjuncture. An additional principle of adult learning that may be considered with regard to impact of the fixed-content course upon instructors is that of *disjuncture*, a condition described by Jarvis (2006) as the catalyst for learning. In moments of disjuncture, an individual is faced with a new situation in which he or she

is uncertain how to act.

This study was framed with the idea that ready-to-teach, fixed-content course instructors are adult learners; they are learning how to apply previously-held teaching skills in a unique online environment and they are learning new teaching skills. The impact of the fixed-content course upon instructors has created a situation of disjuncture and of potential learning.

Some aspects of fixed-content course impact upon instructors may be uncomfortable due to inconvenience. However, other aspects of fixed-course impact upon instructors may be uncomfortable because of the necessity of learning new teaching skills and adapting away from personal preferences. In the process of adjusting and changing, fixed-content instructors enter a state of ongoing, purposeful learning. This may potentially be a positive impact of the fixed-content course despite negative feelings that some instructors experience when they do not have the ability to control the course in the way they would like.

Nonreflective and reflective learning in teacher skill acquisition. In discussing how adults learn, Jarvis (2006) described two types of learning: nonreflective and reflective. Nonreflective learning includes prescribed steps and specific instructions to follow. Reflective learning, on the other hand, is intensely personal. It provides the opportunity to agree or disagree, to accept what has been presented to the learner without modification or to adapt what has been presented.

Finding 3 of the current study demonstrated that multiple influences helped study participants learn to be an instructor in a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course.

Some of those influences were nonreflective, such as formal instructor training, and others were reflective, such as personal, incidental experiences gained while being an online student or instructor.

The literature review in Chapter II of this study presented research regarding the role of online instructor training. The literature demonstrated the need for instructor training prior to online teaching experience, particularly with regard to aspects of LMS use and techniques for course facilitation. Comments from participants in the current study validated these assertions. As part of formal U UW training, instructors valued learning the function of the LMS and how they could use the LMS to set a tone for their course. They also considered the experience of seeing an online course from the perspective of a student, another aspect of formal U UW training, to be important.

Examination of Table 5 (p. 67) reveals many other influences in addition to formal training that contributed to how study participants learned to be an online instructor. In the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher listened carefully to the nature of the remarks instructors made about how they learned to fulfill their role. Even though comments related to the formal U UW training were typically positive, the researcher observed instructors were less emotionally engaged in their discussions of the formal training than they were in describing how their knowledge of instructor practice came from being an online student, from previous or other online teaching experience, or from skills gained through continued practice.

Study participants' enthusiasm to describe how they have learned to be an online instructor through personal experiences other than formal training may demonstrate the

way that reflective learning is inherent in characteristics of adult learners described by Knowles (1980): they are self-directed, their learning is often based in past experience, they are problem-centered, and their motivations are internal (Merriam et al., 2007).

**Motivation of Participants to Continue
with the Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-
Content Format**

Finding 5 stated that commitment to online education, love of teaching, and fulfillment of personal needs motivated adjunct online instructors to continue in their employment with U UW. All instructors in this study had two or more semesters' experience and nine of the 10 were likely to continue in their employment with U UW. A brief exploration of research related to the concept of teacher identity may provide insight into why instructors continue teaching in the fixed-content format despite its limitations.

Teacher identity. Table 7 (p. 81) demonstrates that love of teaching ranked highly as a shared characteristic between all study participants. In the data collection process, all 10 instructors discussed love of students and the satisfaction of seeing student development. Furthermore, 7 of the 10 instructors discussed the importance of the online setting for making education available for students who would not receive one otherwise. This data indicates that study participants were highly committed educators who were motivated to teach and who felt strongly about the importance of what they do. These characteristics, reflecting a sense of purposeful action behind instructors' efforts and a strong sense of self, may be considered in the light of teacher identity.

The concept of teacher identity has been researched widely in the last 20 years. Even so, a precise definition has remained elusive (Izadinia, 2013). Sachs (2005, as cited

in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) provided a general statement which encompasses several key aspects of teacher identity:

Teacher professional identity then stands at the core of the teaching profession. It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience. (p. 178)

Sachs' framework connects with the discussion earlier in this chapter that emphasized the importance of experience as the foundation of learning. Teaching experience contributes to the formation of teaching identity.

Teacher identity formation. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) described teacher professional identity formation as a process that draws upon many sources of knowledge, including teaching, human relations, and subject matter. Teachers' personal preconceived ideas prior to actual professional teaching experience can also influence identity. Because such ideas may come from personal relationships or observations of teaching, an individual's memories of life experience must be taken into consideration as a starting point for the formation of teacher identity.

Jarvis (2006) stated that our store of memories becomes a basis for our self-identity (p. 44). Consequently, experiences from childhood or young adulthood, early teacher role models, and previous teaching experiences can contribute to a teacher's sense of self and purpose. Jack, a participant in this study, illustrated this form of identity formation when he discussed the type of learning he hoped to provide for students in his online class. Concerning his own undergraduate education, he related:

I think some of the things that were most helpful to me in my undergraduate and

graduate work as a student were the experiences that the professors or doctors shared from their experiences and how I could see those things happening to me in my career. I remember a lot of them saying things that I disagreed with while I was a student, thinking, "That will never happen." And then they did happen.

Therefore, as was previously indicated in finding 4 of this study, part of Jack's view of his role was to provide real-life examples to prepare students for actual practice. His teaching identity was formed in part by his life history.

Emotions and teacher identity. Zembylas (2003) explored the significance of emotion in the development of teacher identity. He proposed that the construction of teacher identity is affective at its source. He also contended that investigating the emotional aspects of teacher identity brings about a more nuanced understanding of self as teacher: "I believe it is important that teachers identify how their emotions inform the ways that their emotions expand or limit possibilities in their teaching, and how these emotions enable them to think and act differently" (p. 232).

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) indicated that emotion figures into the discussion of identity as a dimension of self. Emotion is "an influential factor in teachers' approaches to their professional lives and to their identities" (p. 180). One such emotion is the caring aspect of teaching: "The caring teachers want to demonstrate implies a particular perspective they take on their professional identity" (p. 180).

Beijaard et al. (2004) indicated that experienced teachers seem to perceive interaction with students and commitment to serving students as positive. Furthermore, Beijaard et al. reported that a teacher's positive self-perception can overpower dissatisfaction with difficult working conditions. The love of teaching, including most notably a love for students and a commitment to provide education to those who might

not have it otherwise, figured into the identity of the instructors in this study. The caring aspect of teaching expressed by participants in this study may represent a key affective portion of their teacher identity that enabled them to continue teaching in the fixed-content format despite negative perceptions that some of them held.

Summary of the Discussion

The preceding sections of this chapter discussed researcher observations related to the experiences of 10 adjunct online instructors for UUW. These observations were framed by principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1980), Jarvis's (2006) theory of learning, and researcher interpretations made from study data.

Effects of Instructional Unbundling

The practice of instructional unbundling in higher education created the setting for this study. Literature regarding unbundling was discussed while making connections to patterns and trends revealed in study data. The costs of unbundling—monetary, emotional, and instructional—were considered with regard to the data generated by this study.

Instructors as Adult Learners

The limitations of the fixed-content course required instructors to change and adapt. Some instructors were able to accept the changes imposed upon them more easily than others. Characteristics of adult learners that are suppressed with the fixed-content course format may contribute to an understanding of the varied responses.

Despite the restrictions of the fixed-content format, adjunct online instructors were allowed to influence the learning environment in their courses. Formal institutional training provided a starting point for instructors to become familiar with UUW's LMS and basic expectations regarding their employment. However, study data revealed that instructors personalized their courses in a variety of ways. Reasons for the diversity of instructor actions may be explained in part by considering the individual and transformative nature of learning.

Fulfillment of Teacher-Self

Study data revealed that among this sample of online instructors, most were likely to continue in their employment with UUW, regardless of the limitations the fixed-content format imposed upon them. A brief exploration of the concept of teacher identity provided perspectives that may explain why fulfillment of the instructors' core sense of teacher-self enabled most of them to accept the fixed-content format.

Limitations and Cautions

Limitations are conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may affect the outcome of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The use of qualitative methodology introduced inherent limitations into this study. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary research instrument (Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 2002). Data is assembled through the researcher's personal lens. Subsequent descriptions of the data represent the researcher's own interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

Findings in a qualitative study are drawn from the data of that particular study and

cannot be generalized to other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although findings can be transferable, the decision of transferability must be made by the consumer of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings and conclusions of this study contain the experiences of participants in this study and may not reflect the experiences of other instructors of ready-to-teach, online courses for institutions other than U UW.

Another limitation resides in the fact that U UW has 289 online courses and employs 1,565 online instructors. As a result, even though care was taken to select study participants to represent a variety of courses, some U UW departments and their associated online courses do not figure into this study. Furthermore, as is always the case with qualitative research, the trustworthiness of data participants provide depends upon their willingness to accurately represent their experiences.

Finally, only 10 participants were given the opportunity to contribute data to this study by way of interviews, telephone conversations, and electronic communication. Study participants were volunteers, thereby representing a high degree of interest in the subject. This led to rich and interesting data from which to draw conclusions; however, it may have influenced the data that were collected in directions characteristic of highly motivated individuals in the study sample. A similar study with 10 different participants could potentially yield different insights. For these reasons, conclusions that have been drawn and analyses that have been provided must be regarded as being specific to this particular research sample.

Recommendations for Practice

The researcher offers some recommendations based upon the findings and analysis of this study. The following recommendations are for institutions that sponsor ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses and instructors of ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses, both current and potential.

The success of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course depends upon the success of the online instructor. By attending to the needs of online instructors at every stage of their affiliation with the educational institution, schools will promote the establishment of a quality online faculty, will assist in helping new instructors be effective as quickly as possible following hiring, and will encourage long-term participation in the online program. Reducing turnover among faculty members will lead to improved student performance and will ease demands on school resources.

Teacher Recruitment

Sponsoring institutions will be well served by dedicating considerable resources to the process of recruiting qualified teachers. Such recruitment efforts should include full disclosure of what the ready-to-teach, fixed-content teaching experience entails, including:

- A description of the measurable tasks to be accomplished each week and the number of hours instructors will be compensated.
- A demonstration of the learning environment in which instructors will function. Many potential adjunct online instructors will already be familiar with at least one LMS, but it would be helpful for them to see the specific environment that has been selected or built by the sponsoring institution.
- A clear explanation of what the course content is, how it is organized, and

how instructors will be expected to help students succeed with it.

- A demonstration of ways that instructors can influence the environment of the course, including personalized messages, screencasts, audio recordings, and other asynchronous learning tools with which they may not be familiar.

One participant in this study recommended that potential instructors be allowed to “shadow” for a period of time an instructor in the course that he or she would teach, possibly even sharing some instructor responsibilities. Student teaching is a tried and tested concept in face-to-face education. Similar benefits may be noted from employing a similar model in online classrooms.

Teacher Inservice

Continuing-teacher inservice programs should be structured by the sponsoring institution so as to accommodate and encourage growth and development in online adjunct instructors. UW currently groups teachers for inservice according to subject matter being taught, but there could be potential benefits to grouping instructors not only according to subject but also the number of semesters completed. Inservice topics that could be beneficial for novice instructors differ from inservice topics that could potentially provide meaningful perspectives for experienced teachers and assist them in their individual learning of effective facilitation efforts. Keeping inservice relevant to the needs of instructors at all times of their employment will reinforce their commitment to participate meaningfully in inservice and to grow professionally.

Course Content Summary and Rationale

Some study participants noted the difficulty of not understanding the instructional or design choices that were made for their courses. Sponsoring institutions should

provide a course content summary and rationale to online instructors that displays the purpose and objectives of materials in the course.

Benefits from such a rationale could be two-fold. First, in the process of preparing the rationale, instructional designers and course content experts would be faced with the responsibility of explaining their choices in terms of school educational philosophy, effective online teaching practice, and departmental course requirements to meet accreditation standards. This level of self-examination would provide a safeguard against arbitrariness and would promote mindful practice. Second, instructors would benefit from knowing the reasons for materials in the course. Even if instructors would make other choices if the responsibility to govern course content and design were theirs, the rationale would eliminate the guesswork involved with trying to discern the purpose behind course materials. Additionally, if instructors wanted to suggest other assignments or activities to the school, they would need to meet all the criteria the rationale identifies for the particular course element. Needing to justify suggestions in this manner would serve as another protection against arbitrariness. The rationale would become a common language between instructors and the course owners as they communicate about course content.

Instructor Knowledge of Communication Tools

Current and potential online instructors should keep abreast of digital communication tools that can be leveraged for online learning. Many instructors in this study increased their personal satisfaction within the ready-to-teach, fixed-content teaching environment by knowing of methods to connect with students and to enhance

student performance. The ingenuity displayed by study participants revealed that creativity and personal initiative continue to transform instructor practice.

Instructor Self-Assessment

Adjunct online instructors, both current and potential, should regularly assess their personal educational values and their assumptions regarding teaching. Traditionally, the role of teacher has incorporated a significant amount of freedom. Instructors need to anticipate that such freedoms may increasingly be seen by educational institutions as privileges instead of rights.

The ready-to-teach, fixed-content format has created an educational setting that draws upon previous teaching experience but also introduces some new elements, as this study revealed. By being aware of their core beliefs and emotional needs in a teaching setting, potential instructors can assess whether or not they would be capable of functioning effectively with the restrictions imposed by the fixed-content online course format. As institutional requirements increase and as technology creates new teaching opportunities that are shaped differently than previous forms of education, instructors will need to be able to adapt to constraints more than ever before.

Recommendations for Further Research

Similar Studies

As a result of this study and its findings, several implications for further research emerged. The current study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the experience of using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses. Due to the variety of

participant responses and the non-generalizable nature of qualitative research, many similar studies could be conducted and yield meaningful results. Such studies could be compared with the current study to control for researcher bias and subjectivity.

Other Perspectives

The current study chose to examine the perspective of instructors in fixed-content courses. Studies involving other individuals affected by instructional unbundling in fixed-content courses, such as course content experts, instructional designers, or school administrators could make perspectives available that provide a more complete picture of the instructional unbundling phenomenon. Data from such studies could be compared with the current study for point of analysis.

Factors Leading to Instructor Burnout

The discussion of ways that instructors asserted their individuality against the constraints of the fixed-content course revealed that some instructors invested a considerable amount of time and energy to compensate for other limitations. While such efforts were rewarding to instructors, they also required a significant amount of mental and emotional energy. A study of factors leading to adjunct online instructor burnout could provide valuable perspectives to help sponsoring institutions and instructors alike in their pursuit of a sustainable work balance.

Instructor Discontinuance

The current study mandated that instructors in the research sample have at least two semesters' experience as an adjunct online instructor for UUW. Despite struggles

with the fixed-content format reported by some research participants, all have demonstrated persistence in the ready-to-teach environment and most intended to continue in their employment. A study of instructors who chose to discontinue employment with UUW after less than two semesters may yield valuable insights into the fixed-content format and what characteristics are necessary for an instructor to be successful. Findings from that study could also be compared with the current study as a measure of confirming researcher postulations about what influences an instructor to remain in their online adjunct work.

Other Perspectives on Motivation

All research participants were adherents of the religious denomination that sponsors UUW. Loyalty to religious preference may have figured into instructor motivation to continue online adjunct work with UUW. A similar study of online adjuncts at an institution without any religious affiliation might provide other perspectives about what motivates instructors to seek and continue online adjunct employment.

Impact of Unbundling on Students

Gehrke and Kezar (2015) observed that the literature regarding instructional unbundling in higher education offers little regarding the effect of the practice on students. Multiple studies could be initiated, both quantitative and qualitative, that explore student experiences and perspectives regarding unbundling in online education. Such research could probe student scores, student views regarding instructional materials,

student evaluations of instructor performance, and student perceptions of efficiencies or inefficiencies that impacted their learning experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain insights into the experiences of adjunct online instructors who use ready-to-teach, fixed-content courses. Principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1980) and Jarvis's (2006) theory of learning were used as the lens through which the study was framed and interpreted. The use of qualitative research methods supplied rich data and meaningful insights into the lived experiences of teachers as they adapted to an instructional environment that limited the scope of their actions with regard to course content. The circumstance of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course provided a setting in which effects of the phenomenon known as instructional unbundling in higher education were displayed. The current study contributed to the need for research related to unbundling (Gehrke & Kezar, 2015).

This study also contributed to the literature regarding online teaching in general and ready-to-teach online courses in particular. Study data revealed that instructors noted positive and negative aspects of the limited instructor role with regard to instructional content and course design. However, instructors each applied previous personal teaching experience to their work when possible and learned new skills when necessary in order to assist online students in the learning process. These actions aligned with principles of adult education and learning (Jarvis, 2006; Knowles, 1980) and demonstrated the ongoing state of learning fixed-content instructors may experience as a result of their

limited instructor role.

This study provides perspectives related to adjunct online instructors in the literature. The institutional benefits that can be accomplished by the unbundling of the instructor role are legitimate; however, by placing adjunct online instructors in a position of needing to act in a manner contrary to principles of andragogy, instructor dissatisfaction can result. Educational institutions that choose to employ the fixed-content model can benefit from the results of this study by identifying areas in which adjunct instructors have succeeded and replicating those elements in their courses. These institutions can also identify areas of difficulty described in the study data and take steps to alleviate those difficulties. Additionally, this research study contains meaningful descriptions, findings, and interpretations that can provide a basis for future research.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, L. (2016). *How many students attend Grand Canyon University?* Retrieved from <http://blogs.gcu.edu/blog/how-many-students-attend-grand-canyon-university/>
- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2013). *Changing course: Ten years of tracking online education in the United States*. Newburyport, MA: Online Learning Consortium. Retrieved from http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/survey_report/changing-course-ten-years-tracking-online-education-united-states/
- Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2015). *Grade level: Tracking online education in the United States*. Newburyport, MA: Online Learning Consortium. Retrieved from <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradelevel.pdf>
- Anderson, T. (2003). Modes of interaction in distance education: Recent developments and research questions. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), *Handbook of distance education* (pp. 129-144). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Arsht, S. (2011). *Preparing Florida college faculty to teach online* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3462990)
- Awalt, C. J. (2003). *Moving from the classroom to online teaching: A study of change in faculty attitudes* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3116254).
- Bailey, C. J. (2008). *Best practices for online teaching: Perceptions of South Dakota award-winning online university faculty* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3333966)
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Baran, E., Correia, A., & Thompson, A. (2011). Transforming online teaching practice: Critical analysis of the literature on the roles and competencies of online teachers. *Distance Education*, 32(3), 421-439. doi: 10.1080/01587919.2011.610293
- Bawane, J., & Spector, J. M. (2009). Prioritization of online instructor roles: Implications for competency-based teacher education programs. *Distance Education*, 30(3), 383-398. doi: 10.1080/01587910903235636
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 39(2), 175-189.

- Bedford, L., & Miller, H. (2013). All adjuncts are not created equal: An exploratory study of teaching and professional needs of online adjuncts. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 15(1). Retrieved from https://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring161/bedford_miller.html
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107-128.
- Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. D. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: An exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(7), 749-764.
- Berrett, D. (2012). Underpaid and restless: Study presents a "dismal picture" of life as a part-time professor. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.chronicle.com/article/A-Dismal-Picture-of-Life-as/132421>
- Blackmon, S. J., & Major, C. (2012). Student experiences in online courses: A qualitative research synthesis. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 13(2), 77-85.
- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2012). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bonk, C., Kirkley, J., Hara, N., & Dennen, V. (2000, April). *Advances in pedagogy: Finding the instructor in post-secondary online learning*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Bonnel, W. (2008). Improving feedback given to students in online courses. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 29(5), 290-295.
- Borgemenke, A. J., Holt, W. C., & Fish, W. W. (2013). Universal course shell template design and implementation to enhance student outcomes in online coursework. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 14(1), 17-23.
- Borrego, J. (2010). Roadmap for a successful transition to an online environment. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 3(5), 59-66.
- Boyce, B. (2011). *Understanding learning interactions in the home-study and technology-mediated seminary program for youth in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3465163)
- Caruth, G. D., & Caruth, D. L. (2013). Adjunct faculty: Who are these unsung heroes of academe? *Current Issues in Education*, 16(3), 1-10. Retrieved from <http://cie.asu.edu/ojs/index.php/cieatasu/article/view/1269/528>

- Casey, D. M. (2008). A journey to legitimacy: The historical development of distance education through technology. *Techtrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improving Learning*, 52(2), 45-51.
- Chester, M. C. (2012). *Challenges faced by faculty who transition to post-secondary online education* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3523893)
- Chi, A. (2013). *The journey to teaching online: A case study of faculty preparation and experiences in online teaching* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3597952)
- Christensen, C. M., & Eyring, H. J. (2011). *The innovative university: Changing the DNA of higher education from the inside out*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Croxton, R. A. (2014). The role of interactivity in student satisfaction and persistence in online learning. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 10(2), 314-324.
- Daniel, J. S. (1996). *Mega-universities and knowledge media: Technology strategies for higher education*. London, England: Kogan Page.
- Davidson-Shivers, G. V. (2009). Frequency and types of instructor-interactions in online instruction. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning* 8(1), 23-40.
- Davison, D. (2016, October). "Canned" courses and faculty responsibilities. Retrieved from <http://www.asccc.org/content/%E2%80%9Ccanned%E2%80%9Dcourses-and-faculty-responsibilities>
- Dennen, V., Darabi, A., & Smith, L. (2007). Instructor-learner interaction in online courses: The relative perceived importance of particular instructor actions on performance and satisfaction. *Distance Education* (28)1, 65-79.
- Dirkin, K. H. (2008). *Three professors teaching online: The realization of teaching perspectives* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3331894)
- Downing, M. A. (2013). *Determining best practices for training instructors to teach in the online environment* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3595818)

- Faulkner-Beitzel, C. (2008). *Learning to teach online: An interpretive study of high school teachers' experiences in developing online pedagogy* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3330685)
- Gappa, J. M., & Leslie, D. W. (1993). *The invisible faculty: Improving the status of part-timers in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- García, E., Arias, M., Murri, N., & Serna, C. (2010). Developing responsive teachers: A challenge for a demographic reality. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61(1-2), 132-142. doi: 10.1177/0022487109347878
- Garrison, D. R., & Shale, D. (Eds.). (1990). *Education at a distance: From issues to practice*. Melbourne, FL: Krieger.
- Gehrke, S., & Kezar, A. (2015). Unbundling the faculty role in higher education: Utilizing historical, theoretical, and empirical frameworks to inform future research. In M. B. Paulsen (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 30, pp. 93-150). New York, NY: Springer.
- Geschwind, L., & Broström, A. (2015). Managing the teaching-research nexus: Ideals and practice in research-oriented universities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(1), 60-73. doi: 10.1080/07294360.2014.934332
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Golden, J. (2016). Supporting online faculty through communities of practice: Finding the faculty voice. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 53(1), 84-93. doi: 10.1080/14703297.2014.910129
- Gregory, J., & Salmon, G. (2013). Professional development for online university teaching. *Distance Education*, 34(3), 256-270. doi: 10.1080/01587919.2013.835771
- Green, A. (2012). *Training and support for successful online instruction* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3543778)
- Green, D. W. (2007). Adjunct faculty and the continuing quest for quality. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2007(140), 29-39.
- Hara, B. (2010, November 18). Academic freedom versus mandated course content. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/academic-freedom-vs-mandated-course-content/28764>

- Henry, S. N. (2014). *E-learning instructor views on professional development: An investigation of current practice* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3711619)
- Hill, P. (2012). Online educational delivery models: A descriptive view. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 47(6), 84-97. Retrieved from <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2012/11/online-educational-delivery-models--a-descriptive-view>
- Hillman, D., Willis, D., & Gunawardena, C. (1994). Learner-interface interaction in distance education: An extension of contemporary models and strategies for practitioners. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 8(2), 30-42.
- Hoffman, D. D. (2016). *Considering the crossroads of distance education: The experiences of instructors as they transitioned to online or blended courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (ProQuest No. 10124158)
- Hirumi, A. (2002). A framework for analyzing, designing, and sequencing planned e-learning interactions. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 3(2), 141-160.
- Holmberg, B. (1995). *Theory and practice of distance education* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hoyt, J. E. (2012). Predicting the satisfaction and loyalty of adjunct faculty. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 60(3), 132-142. <http://ex.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2013.722417>
- Huss, J. A., Sela, O., & Eastep, S. (2015). A case study of online instructors and their quest for greater interactivity in their courses: Overcoming the distance in distance education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(4), 71-86.
- Izadinia, M. (2013). A review of research on student teachers' professional identity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(4), 694-713.
- Jaggars, S., Edgecombe, N., & Stacey, G. (2013). *Creating an effective online instructor presence*. Retrieved from ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/effective-online-instructor-presence.pdf
- Jarvis, P. (2006). *Towards a comprehensive theory of human learning*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jewett, F. I. (2000). A framework for the comparative analysis of the costs of classroom instruction vis-à-vis distributed instruction. In M. J. Finkelstein, C. Frances, F. I. Jewett, & B. W. Scholz, (Eds.), *Dollars, distance, and online education: the new economics of college teaching and learning* (pp. 85-122). Phoenix, AZ: Oryx.

- Johnson, D. R. (2013). Technological change and professional control in the professoriate. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 38(1), 126-149. doi: 10.177/0162243911430236
- Johnston, J., Killion, J., & Oomen, J. (2005). Student satisfaction in the virtual classroom. *The Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice*, 3(2), 1-7.
- Keeler, L. C. (2006). *Student satisfaction and types of interaction in distance education courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (UMI No. 3233345)
- Kezar, A. (2012). Spanning the great divide between tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 44(6), 6-13. doi: 10.1080/00091383.2012.728949
- Kezar, A. (2013). Departmental cultures and non-tenure track faculty: Willingness, capacity, and opportunity to perform at four-year institutions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 84(2) 153-188. <http://dx.doi.org;10.1353/jhe.2013.0011>
- Kezar, A., & Sam, C. (2013). Institutionalizing equitable policies and practices for contingent faculty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 84(1), 56-87. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2013.0002
- Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge Books.
- Kuo, Y.-C., Walker, A. E., Schroder, K. E. E., & Belland, B. R. (2014). Interaction, internet self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning as predictors of student satisfaction in online education courses. *Internet and Higher Education*, 20, 35-50. doi: 10.1016/j.iheduc.2013.10.001
- Lari, P. (2008). *Understanding teaching experiences: Faculty transitions from traditional to online classrooms* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3329821)
- Leisyte, L., & Dee, J. R. (2012). Understanding academic work in a changing institutional environment: Faculty autonomy, productivity, and identity in Europe and the United States. In J. C. Smart & M. B. Paulsen (Eds.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 27, pp. 123-206). New York, NY: Springer.
- Lewis, T. O. (2007). *The preparation of faculty to teach online: A qualitative approach* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3256126)

- Liftig, R. A. (2014). The American adjunct: Almost always a bridesmaid, almost never a bride. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 43(3), 10-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.2505/4/jcst14_043_03_10
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- LoBasso, L. M. (2013). *An investigation into the training of instructors of online graduate education courses at institutions of higher education* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3603016)
- Madland, C., & Richards, G. (2016). Enhancing student-student online interaction: Exploring the study buddy peer review activity. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 17(3), 157-175.
- Magda, A. J., Poulin, R., & Clinefelter, D. L. (2015). *Recruiting, orienting, & supporting online adjunct faculty: A survey of practices*. Louisville, KY: The Learning House. Retrieved from www.learninghouse.com/adjunct2015-report
- Maguire, L. L. (2005). Literature review—faculty participation in online distance education: Barriers and motivators. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 8(1). Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring81/maguire81.pdf
- Mahlis, M. C. (2002). Teacher role formation. *Action in teacher education*, 24(1), 9-21.
- Mandernach, J. Register, L., & O'Donnell, C. (2015). Characteristics of adjunct faculty teaching online: Institutional implications. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 18(1). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring181/mandernach_register_odonnell181.html
- Mann, C. (2013). *A case study: Motivating and supporting faculty members who teach online courses in a private university* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 35988565)
- McCann, J., & Holt, R. (2009). An exploration of burnout among online university professors. *International Journal of E-Learning and Distance Education*, 23(3), 97-110.
- McKenzie, B. K., & Roblyer, M. D. (2000). Distant but not out of touch: What makes an effective distance learning instructor? *Learning & Leading with Technology*, 27(6), 50-53.
- McQuiggan, C. A. (2011). *Preparing to teach online as transformative faculty development* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3471829)

- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, K. A., & Murrell, V. S. (2014). A national study of theories and their importance for faculty development for online teaching. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 17(2). Retrieved from www.wegta.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer172/Meyer_Murrell172.html
- Moore, M. G. (1989). Editorial: Three types of interaction. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 3(2), 1-7.
- Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2005). *Distance education: A systems view* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Neely, P. W., & Tucker, J. P. (2010). Unbundling faculty roles in online distance education programs. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 11(2), 20-32.
- Nelson, J. L. (2003). Academic freedom, institutional integrity and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(1), 65-72.
- Padilla Rodriguez, B. C., & Armellini, A. (2014). Applying the interaction equivalency theorem to online courses in a large organization. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning* 13(2), 51-66.
- Pankowski, M. M. (2003). *How do undergraduate mathematics faculty learn to teach online?* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3085496)
- Paris, D. (2013). The last artisans? Traditional and future faculty roles. *Peer Review*, 15(3), 17-20.
- Parsons, J., & Frick, W. C. (2008). Why professors hate their jobs: A critique of the pedagogy of academic disengagement. *Culture, Society, & Praxis*, 7(2), 30-46.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Paulson, K. (2002). Reconfiguring faculty roles for virtual settings. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 73(1), 123-140.

- Pepicello, W. (2012). University of Phoenix. In D. G. Oblinger (Ed.), *Game changers: Education and information technologies* (pp. 133-144). Louisville, CO: EDUCAUSE.
- Picciano, A. G. (2002). Beyond student perceptions: Issues of interaction, presence, and performance in an online course. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 6(1), 21-40.
- Piña, A. A., & Bohn, L. (2014). Assessing online faculty: More than student surveys and design rubrics. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 15(3), 25-34.
- Ponterotto, J. G. (2006). Brief note on the origins, evolution, and meaning of the qualitative research concept thick description. *The Qualitative Report*, 11(3), 538-549.
- Prosser, M., Martin, E., Trigwell, K., Ramsden, P., & Middleton, H. (2008). University academics' experience of research and its relationship to their experience of teaching. *Instructional Science*, 36(1), 3-16. doi: 10.1007/s11251-007-9019-4
- Quinn, P. K. (2014). *Understanding faculty roles and attitudes in ready-to-teach online courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3670859)
- Regino, R. C. (2009). *Teacher perceptions of their training to teach online within community colleges in one region in California* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3341926)
- Revere, L., & Kovach, J. (2011). Online technologies for engaged learning: A meaningful synthesis for educators. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 12(2), 113-124.
- Rhode, J. (2009). Interaction equivalency in self-paced learning environments: An exploration of learner preferences. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 10(1). Retrieved from <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/603/1178>
- Rice, R. (2006). From Athens and Berlin to LA: Faculty work & the new academy. *Liberal Education*, 92(4), 6-13.
- Rockwell, S. K., Schauer, J., Fritz, S. M., & Marx, D. B. (1999). Incentives and obstacles influencing higher education faculty and administrators to teach via distance. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 2(4). Retrieved from www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/winter24/rockwell24.pdf

- Rovai, A. P., & Downey, J. R. (2010). Why some distance education programs fail while others succeed in a global environment. *Internet & Higher Education* 13(2010), 141-147. doi: 10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.07.001
- Roy, M. (2015). *Teacher preparation and professional development: Competencies and skill sets for the online classroom* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3739316)
- Russell, A. K. (2011). *Catalysts for re-examining pedagogical assumptions: A phenomenological inquiry into higher education faculty designing and teaching online courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3494490)
- Savery, J. R. (2005). BE VOCAL: Characteristics of successful online instructors. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 4(2), 141-152. Retrieved from www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/pdf/4.2.6.pdf
- Schram, T. H. (2003). *Conceptualizing qualitative inquiry*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Schrire, S. (2006). Knowledge building in asynchronous discussion groups: Going beyond quantitative analysis. *Computers & Education*, 46(1), 49-70.
- Scott, L. C. (2009). *Through the wicked spot: A case study of professors' experiences teaching online* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3379753)
- Sellers, R. (2001). *Learning to teach in a virtual environment: A case study of the Louisiana virtual classroom teachers* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3016578)
- Serow, R. C. (2000). Research and teaching at a research university. *Higher Education*, 40(4), 449-463.
- Shearer, R. L., Gregg, A., & Joo, K. P. (2015). Deep learning in distance education: Are we achieving the goal? *American Journal of Distance Education*, 29(2), 126-134.
- Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S., (2012). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Skibba, K. (2011). *An investigation of how faculty members learn to teach adult students in blended programs* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3492458)

- Slaughter, S., & Rhoades, G. (2004). *Academic capitalism and the new economy: Markets, state, and higher education*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, V. (2008). *The unbundling and rebundling of the faculty role in e-learning community college courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3315310)
- Spilt, J. L., Hughes, J. N., Wu, J.-Y., & Kwok, O.-M. (2012). Dynamics of teacher-student relationships: Stability and change across elementary school and the influence on children's academic success. *Child Development*, 83(4), 1180-1195.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Starcher, K., & Mandernach, B. J. (2016). An examination of adjunct faculty characteristics: Comparison between non-profit and for-profit institutions. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 19(1). Retrieved from http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring191/starcher_mandernach191.html
- Su, B., Bonk, C., Magjuka, R., Liu, X., & Lee, S. (2005). The importance of interaction in Web-based education: A program-level case study of online MBA courses. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 4(1), 1-19.
- Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. (1995). What theory is not. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(3), 371-384.
- Taylor, A., & McQuiggan, C. (2008). Faculty development programming: If we build it, will they come? *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, 31(3), 28-37. Retrieved from <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EQM0835.pdf>
- Thiede, R. (2012). Best practices with online courses. *US-China Education Review*, A(2), 135-141. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED532176.pdf>
- Turgeon, A., Di Biase, D., & Miller, G. (2000). Introducing the Penn State World Campus through certificate programs in turfgrass management and geographic information systems. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 4(3), 279-292.
- Twigg, C. (2003). Improving quality and reducing cost: Designs for effective learning. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 35(4), 22-29.
- Vitale, A. T. (2010). Faculty development and mentorship using selected online asynchronous teaching strategies. *Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 41(12), 549-557.

- Vrasidas, C., & McIsaac, M. S. (1999). Factors influencing interaction in an online course, *American Journal of Distance Education*, 13(3), 22-36.
- Waltman, J., Bergom, I., Hollenshead, C., Miller, J., & August, L. (2012). Factors contributing to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among non-tenure track. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 83(3), 411-434.
- Wang, W. K. S. (1975). The unbundling of higher education. *Duke Law Journal*, 1, 53-90.
- Wenger, E. (2006). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction*. Retrieved from <http://wenger-trayer.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Zembylas, M. (2003). Emotions and teacher identity: A poststructural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching*, 9(3), 213-238. doi: 10.1080/13540600309378

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Letter of Information



Page 1 of 2
 Protocol # 8156
 IRB Approval Date: 01/17/2017
 Amendment #1 Approved: 1/18/2017
 Consent Document Expires: 01/16/2020
 IRB Password Protected per IRB Coordinator

Informed Consent

Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Courtney Stewart, assistant professor, and Douglas Geilman, doctoral candidate, in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the experiences of online adjunct instructors who use ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses, including 1) perceptions and opinions online adjunct instructors have about the ready-to-teach course format, 2) what influences the decisions online instructors make about how to fulfill their role in a fixed-content online course, and 3) ways the ready-to-teach course format aligns with or differs from previous teaching experiences. Data collected will contribute to a greater understanding of the role of the instructor in this particular form of online distance education.

This form includes detailed information on the research to help you decide whether to participate in this study. Please read it carefully and ask any questions you have before you agree to participate.

Procedures

Your participation will involve two interviews. The first will be an open-ended interview lasting no more than one hour. This interview will be audio recorded. Soon afterward, you will be provided with a transcript of the first interview for your review. The second interview will be a follow-up conversation, also lasting no more than one hour, for the purpose of clarifying statements from the first interview and for discussing any new thoughts or insights. If you so choose, you may also submit additional information including personal documents or journal writings to the researchers via email. If you decide to provide these materials to the researchers, please ensure that no student documents are included. Your total participation in this project is expected to be three hours or less.

Risks

This is a minimal risk research study. That means that the risks of participating are no more likely or serious than those you encounter in everyday activities. There is a small risk of loss of confidentiality but we will take steps to reduce that risk, as described in the **Confidentiality** section below.

Benefits

This study will help the researchers learn more about the role of the instructor in ready-to-teach, fixed-content online courses and will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the changing role of the instructor in the age of digital teaching and learning.

Confidentiality

The researchers will make every effort to ensure that the information you provide as part of this study remains confidential. Names will be removed from all data files and pseudonyms will be assigned to each interviewee to protect your privacy. Personal, identifiable information will not be included in the written report of the study. Your identity will not be revealed in any publications, presentations, or reports resulting from this research study.

All digital data collected will be securely stored in a restricted-access folder on Box.com, an encrypted, cloud-based storage system. All physical content will be stored in a locked drawer in a restricted-access office. All sources of data for the study will be destroyed after the study is complete (projected completion date: September 1, 2017).



Page 2 of 2
 Protocol # 8156
 IRB Approval Date: 01/17/2017
 Amendment #1 Approved: 1/18/2017
 Consent Document Expires: 01/16/2020
 IRB Password Protected per IRB Coordinator

It is unlikely, but possible, that others (Utah State University or state or federal officials) may require us to share the information you give us from the study to ensure that the research was conducted safely and appropriately. We will only share your information if law or policy requires us to do so.

Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now and change your mind later, you may withdraw at any time by notifying Dr. Stewart or Douglas Geilman via email. If you choose to withdraw after we have already collected information about you, we will destroy electronic files of interviews or physical data you have provided.

The researchers may choose to terminate your participation in this research study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria. You will be notified via email if this happens.

Compensation

You will not receive any financial compensation for your participation in this research study.

IRB Review

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human research participants at Utah State University has reviewed and approved this study. If you have questions about the research study itself, please contact the Principal Investigator at (435) 797-7145 or courtney.stewart@usu.edu. If you have questions about your rights or would simply like to speak with someone other than the research team about questions or concerns, please contact the IRB Director at (435) 797-0567 or irb@usu.edu.

Courtney Stewart, PhD
 Principal Investigator
 (435) 797-7145; courtney.stewart@usu.edu

Douglas Geilman
 Student Investigator
 (801) 319-9335; douglas.geilman@gmail.com

Informed Consent

By signing below, you agree to participate in this study. You indicate that you understand the risks and benefits of participation, and that you know what you will be asked to do. You also agree that you have asked any questions you might have, and are clear on how to stop your participation in the study if you choose to do so. Please be sure to retain a copy of this form for your records.

Participant's signature and date

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses

I. First Interview

Individual interviews will be conducted to gather data related to the main research question: How does a UUW adjunct online instructor describe his or her instructional experiences within the constraints of a ready-to-teach, fixed-content online course? (Creswell, 2013).

	Topic or Research Subquestion	Question
Question 1	Establish rapport	Ask participant to introduce self and to discuss personal teaching background (Glesne, 2006).
Question 2	What perceptions and opinions does a UUW adjunct online instructor have about the ready-to-teach course format?	Ask participant to describe any features of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format that they like.
Question 3	What perceptions and opinions does a UUW adjunct online instructor have about the ready-to-teach course format?	Ask participant to describe any features of the ready-to-teach, fixed-content course format they would change or adapt.
Question 4	How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?	Ask participant to describe why they chose to teach online after being a face-to-face teacher.
Question 5	How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?	Ask participant to describe how their experience of being an instructor in a fixed-content online course compares to their initial expectations of it.
Question 6	How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?	Ask participant to describe any commonalities they see between their face-to-face and online teaching experiences (Bawane & Spector, 2009).

	Topic or Research Subquestion	Question
Question 7	How does the experience of being an adjunct online instructor for UUW using a ready-to-teach, fixed-content course align with or differ from previous face-to-face teaching experiences?	Ask participant to describe the greatest differences they see between their face-to-face and online teaching experiences (Barrett, 2010).
Question 8	What influences the decisions a UUW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online instructor?	Ask participant to share what they consider to be their role as an online teacher (Mahlios, 2002).
Question 9	What influences the decisions a UUW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online instructor?	Ask participant to describe what experiences have helped them know what to do as an online instructor (Jarvis, 2006).
Question 10	What influences the decisions a UUW adjunct online instructor makes about how to fulfill his or her role as an online instructor?	Ask participant to describe what motivates them to continue being an instructor of the fixed-content type of online course (Jarvis, 2006).

II. Second Interview

Prior to the second interview participants will have reviewed the transcript of the initial interview. They will be invited to give feedback, offer clarifications, or add to the data before final analysis.

	Topic or Research Subquestion	Question
Question 1	Revisiting previous questions as needed.	Ask participant to share anything related to questions in the initial interview—topics to re-visit, clarifications, additional thoughts.

Appendix C

External Audit Letter

I attest that this study meets the trustworthiness requirements for qualitative research. I have performed an external audit in which I have examined the raw data, the analyzed data, and records of study processes. According to my assessment, qualitative methods have been properly followed and the results and findings of this study are grounded in the data.

Dustin R. West, Ph.D.
Instructional Designer, LDS Seminaries and Institutes

CURRICULUM VITAE

DOUGLAS J. GEILMAN

Education:

- 2018 Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction; Utah State University
Dissertation: Experiences of Instructors Using Ready-to-Teach, Fixed-Content Online Courses
- 2005 M.A. Religious Education; Brigham Young University
Thesis: The *Etoile du Déséret*: Portrait of the French Mission, 1851–1852
- 2005 B.A. French (major), English (minor); Brigham Young University

Professional Experience:

- 2010–Present Manager of Online Curriculum, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- 2005–Present Curriculum Writer, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion
- 1995–2005 Instructor, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion

Publications:

- Geilman, D. J. (2012). Learning. In D. L. Largey & L. E. Dahl, (Eds.), *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* (365–366). Salt Lake City: Deseret Book.
- Geilman, D. J. (2012). Knowledge. In D. L. Largey & L. E. Dahl, (Eds.), *Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion* (350–351). Salt Lake City: Deseret Book.
- Geilman, D. J. (2009). *Etoile du Déséret*, Publication of the French Mission 1851–1852. In M. J. Woodger, (Ed.), *John Taylor: Champion of Liberty* (143–169). Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center.

Professional Presentations:

- Geilman, D. J. (2008). The *Etoile du Déséret*: Publication of the French Mission, 1851–1852, Brigham Young University Church History Symposium, Provo, UT.